



PHD

The Impact of Gender Politics on the Socialisation of Care in South Korea

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THE IMPACT OF GENDER POLITICS ON THE SOCIALISATION OF CARE IN SOUTH KOREA

Submitted by

SUNG-HEE LEE

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Bath

Department of Social & Policy Sciences

September 2013

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Abstract

The aim in this research is to investigate to what extent and with what effect gender politics have influenced the process of the socialisation of care in South Korea. To explore the political discourse around it and to assess the outcomes of the political efforts regarding the changing the nature of care, this researcher adopted a research design based on exploratory and explanatory phases. For the former, a quantitative investigation of secondary data was carried out in order to extract relevant statistical information. After having revealed in terms of the selected statistical indicators the nature of childcare provision prevailing before and after the reforms, the explanatory stage, undertaken through in-depth interviews and analysis of policy documents, was subsequently carried out in order to draw out the political and policy narratives behind the tentative findings that emerged from the exploratory phase.

The outcomes of this study reveal that state-centred gender politics was faced with many structural limitations which were identified as being the various obstructions instigated by the private sector. Furthermore, the concept of the socialisation of care, ‘gonggongsung’, remained unformulated and rather vaguely defined throughout the reform process. In parallel to this, marketisation became ever more solid in Korean childcare provision whilst the state-centred gender politics morphed in nature and the direction of the initial policy intent, ‘gonggongsung’, was distorted.

In conclusion, even after the application of policy initiatives, the marketisation of childcare has become much more firmly established and the reliance on informal care has remained as a significant part of childcare provision. There is also some indication that the burden of informal care has shifted to the older generation of women rather than being shared with mothers’ husbands/partners or society at large.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The extent to which caring work has been socialised has received considerable attention in South Korea since the late 1990s owing to initiatives to politicise the socialisation of care, through reconsideration of who should take responsibility for caring work. Socialisation of care in this research (see Chapter 2) refers to the policy direction of sharing the responsibility of childcare between the state, market and family and in this way reduces the burden of childcare within the family. In the Korean political arena this policy direction has been characterised by the usage of the phrase ‘gonggongsung’, which, in general terms, means ‘the reinforcement of publicly funded and provided childcare services’. This was embarked upon with the broad purpose of alleviating the burden of caring within a family and ran alongside the movement termed gender mainstreaming.

Gender mainstreaming incorporates ‘a set of tools and processes designed to integrate a gender perspective into all policies’ (Squires, 2007, p. 39) and was instituted in the Platform for Action established at the fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. This transnational approach to the issue of gender (Walby, 2005, p. 322) prompted the Korean government to accept gender mainstreaming in the same year as a key strategy and legislation entitled the Basic Act on Women’s Development in 1995 were adopted. These placed heavy emphasis on gender equality as well as on women’s empowerment. Three years later, the First Basic Plan on Women’s Policies aimed at promoting their interests within institutions was outlined with the official adoption of gender mainstreaming forming its underpinning principle (The Presidential Commission on Women’s Affairs, 1998). A legal basis for the mandatory gender analysis of the impact on women of any governmental policy interventions was later instituted in 2002 which led to the immediate expansion of the practice of carrying out such impact assessments by central and local governments. In the same vein, in October 2006, under a revision of the National Finance Act, a new clause requiring gender sensitive budgeting in all subsequent legislation was established (Huh, 2005). From the late 1990s until the present day, it appears that this gender movement has played an important role in raising the profile of women’s issues in Korean politics.

Over time, many politicians in the Korean government have gradually become cognisant of the importance of these matters. Among these gender related issues, childcare has been highlighted as an attractive social policy agenda item, because it addresses a number of important concerns including: low fertility rates, the burden of childcare and work life balance (S.-S. Lee, 2009; Peng, 2009; Rhee, 2007). From these issues it appears that the socialising of childcare has become associated with the progress and achievements of the gender mainstreaming movement. Although childcare related issues did not feature until the late 1990s as forming critical new social demands that Korean governments were faced with resolving, since then, policies related to early childhood education and care (ECEC) have undergone some significant revisions which have resulted in the expansion and reaffirmation of the state's commitment to equalising ECEC opportunities for all children. It may be argued that this political atmosphere eventually help to bring about a sixty-fold rise in social expenditure on childcare, from KRW 46,359 million to KRW 3 trillion, between 1991 and 2008. This comprised 0.3% of GDP in 2008 (Baek, Sung, & Lee, 2011).

In this research the political construction of and the recognition of gender issues in moving towards the socialising of care is defined as gender politics. In other words, this is the endeavour to bring gender issues into political debates and thereby seek to make a difference that addresses imbalances between men and women. However, although there has been reform of childcare policy and increased governmental expenditure on it as well as the gender mainstreaming movement engaged in working towards the socialisation of care, it remains doubtful as to whether care, especially that for children, is adequately shared between the state, family and society and whether reforms have impacted significantly on gender roles regarding caring.

There have been a number of studies regarding understanding childcare policy in South Korea and its impacts upon care practice. Won and Pascall (2004) claimed that legislation has not brought about real change in childcare with the state taking little childcare responsibility away from working mothers. In fact, little has been done to discourage men's free-riding on care work in the family or to address the view of mothers as being natural carers (Won & Pascall, 2004). Sung (2003) further argued

that the Confucian tradition makes for difficulties with respect to Korean women's experiences of reconciling paid work in the labour market and unpaid caring work and also has a far reaching impact on the formation of state policy. In parallel, there have been several studies of care regimes which consider the distribution of care provision and/or resources between the state, family and communities. Razavi (2007) for one, has argued that the family in Korea continues to play a significant role in welfare provision. Indeed, when looking after children under two or three years of age, most mothers struggle to find alternative childcare providers outside of their extended family network, despite the fact that the government has recognized this lack of alternative sources of care is a significant issue linked to providing support for working mothers and one that is tied to public fears concerning the consequences of failing to address the low fertility rate of the country (Y.-J. Kim, 2005). Similarly, Peng (2009) opined that public support for care should not be interpreted as simply an expression of the state's intentions to relieve women of family care obligations and in fact, demands considerably more governmental actions.

1.1 The Research

This research aims to investigate to what extent and with what effect gender politics have influenced the process of the socialisation of care in South Korea. Two main research questions are proposed along with sub-questions for each.

RQ1. To what extent have gender politics influenced the socialisation of care for children?

- What have been the political processes and values that have informed the reforms of public childcare?
- What actual policies were formulated to involve the wider society in caring?
- What have been the possible limitations of gender politics in this context?

RQ2. What effects have gender politics had on the modes of provision regarding public childcare after the reform?

- Have gender politics been adequate for accomplishing the socialisation of care?
- What have been the outcomes regarding the modes of public childcare?
- How, if at all, have the gender roles of care work changed between men and women?
- Does informal care still persist in care practice, and, if so, to what extent and how is this manifested?

In this thesis, childcare policy covers public childcare services for children aged from zero to five years old in South Korea. With respect to this, policies have undergone important revisions since the early 2000s and have taken place alongside remarkably diverse socio-economic changes and the recognition of there being a crisis in care (Peng, 2009). The Korean government has reaffirmed state commitment to care by attempting to match its slogan ‘the alleviation of burden of caring within a family’ with the expansion of social care related expenditure (The Presidential Counsel of the Policy Planning Committee, 2007). At the same time, reforms have been stimulated by the mainstreaming movement to promote women’s interests and women related issues, especially those focused on achieving reconciliation for women between their paid employment choices and family life obligations, i.e. their work life balance (Pascall & Sung, 2014; Sung, 2003; Won & Pascall, 2004). Moreover, the gendered nature of unpaid care work affects women throughout all stages of the lifecycle and impacts upon areas such as gender relations in the family as well as women’s participation in the labour market. These shape the gender-linked patterns of labour market investments and attachments, and consequently women’s claims on state welfare resources (Gornick, 1999). Therefore, it may be proposed that state support for reform of public childcare was enacted not only to alleviate the care burden within the family, but also to accomplish gender equality in many connected

areas of social life. In light of this, the focus here is the study of the nature of these reforms in order to elicit the impact of gender politics on the socialisation of care in South Korea.

The focal time period comprises the ten years of public childcare policy reform between 1998 and 2007. The reason for focusing on this period is that in 1998 there was a change of government which heralded changes in attitudes towards welfare reforms and it is informative to track these through the two relevant government terms of office, firstly, under President Kim Dae-jung (1998-2003) and subsequently, President Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2007). The early 2000s was a critical time when political concerns in relation to the crisis in care became more severe and debates turned to the reformation of social care services and the question of the socialising of caring. The early 2000 were also critical in terms of gender politics being activated by the gender mainstreaming movement which, as mentioned above, aimed to place gender issues at the heart of policy making bodies and other institutions' activities. Thus, the early 2000s may be considered significant regarding the expansion of social care services and the activation of gender politics. In this research, the Roh administration is of key interest as this government made considerable effort to socialise caring for children and to achieve a degree of gender equality. Therefore, this researcher addresses the changes that occurred in services, if any, by investigating the modes of provision of childcare services after the efforts made by the Roh administration and this is followed by an assessment of the extent and nature of 'gonggongsung', the care socialisation policy drive.

In this study there are three main aims:

- To develop a conceptual framework(s) for understanding key dimensions associated with the socialisation of caring in provision of public childcare services
- To investigate political processes and actual policies to establish socialised caring through the reform of public childcare services

- To assess the effect of gender politics on those public childcare services after the reform initiative provided

In order to achieve these aims, the following objectives have shaped the study and particularly the methodological research strategies that the researcher has employed.

- To identify gender issues related to the provision of public childcare services
- To investigate the political processes and values which have informed public childcare services prior to the involvement of gender politics
- To critically evaluate the actual policies sought and intended by the intervention of gender politics to accomplish the socialisation of care
- To evaluate whether those policies are perceived to have been successful by stakeholders involved in the political processes
- To assess the changes in terms of outcomes, if any, in the modes of public childcare
- To investigate the structural limitations and political barriers which might be said to have obstructed or promoted reform of care services.

1.1.1 Outline of research methods

To explore the political discourses around the socialisation of care and to assess the outcomes of the political efforts regarding changing the nature of care, it was necessary to bring women's issues regarding caring work to every stage of the research process. This provides a comprehensive approach when investigating the competing discourses occurring in the political debates and when evaluating the effects of the reform process with respect to impacting upon the conditions under which care is carried out and received. In keeping with this, a feminist methodological standpoint was chosen as a medium which privileges women's issues

and ensures that their accounts and understandings inform each methodological stage and the subsequent analysis (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). With regards to this, this researcher has adopted a research design that follows the exploratory – explanatory format (Miles & Huberman, 1984). For the former stage, a quantitative investigation of secondary data was carried out. Subsequently, having revealed in terms of the selected statistical indicators the nature of childcare provision prevailing before and after the reforms, the latter stage was undertaken. For this, qualitative in-depth interviews with key informants and analysis of policy documents were deployed in order to explore the political and policy narratives behind the tentative conclusions that have emerged from the exploratory phase.

Regarding the quantitative phase, the researcher probed large-scale data sets published by well-respected Korean authorities in order to extract relevant statistical information. This selected data was employed to ascertain whether there were any significant changes in institutional care settings and with regards to the actual conditions under which care is carried out and received. The use of secondary analysis offers a number of advantages (Trzesniewski, Donnellan, & Lucas, 2011) and in spite of some limitations concerning compatibility between the different surveys that were carried out in the different years, the selected data can shed light on the changes in public childcare provision. In more detail, this researcher accessed the ‘National Survey on the Attitudes of Using Childcare Services’, for data from the surveys conducted in 2002 and 2009. This was used to look into changes in employing childcare services for these two snapshot years. Moreover, other official statistical sources, such as for example: ‘Statistics on Childcare’, ‘A Chronology of Childcare Statistics’, ‘A Guide to Childcare’ and ‘White Papers on Childcare’, all published annually, were consulted to illuminate changes in provision, particularly state based childcare over the time period of focal interest.

The qualitative explanatory phase of the research forms the larger part of the study. For this, in-depth interviews were carried out with 16 policy participants who were deeply involved with the reform process. The interviewees mainly comprised senior governmental bureaucrats, departmental civil servants, academic consultants and interest group leaders. However, it should be noted that these participants were not

recruited because they had a high degree of consciousness, as individuals, about gender relations regarding caring work or concerning gender sensitive decision-making during the policy reforming activities within the Roh government. By listening to what the informants had to say regarding their own positions, the aim was to illuminate the political conflicts and struggles encountered in bringing gender issues to the agenda. Such debates could be revealed in terms of informal power relations or personal emotional responses that were not recorded at the time. Therefore, the in-depth interviews with the key policy participants allowed for investigation of the wider context in which childcare policy was discussed and policy initiatives decided as well as for the exploration of the competing discourses that emerged.

In addition to the in-depth interviews, as part of the explanatory phase of research documentary analysis was adopted in order to probe the political discourses and to build up a fuller understanding of the policy environments. That is, it provided background information on the basis of which it was possible to carry out the conversational interviews with the key policy actors (Scott, 1990). Furthermore, this researcher acknowledged the need to support her work with factual and substantive evidence regarding the political debates that ensued and therefore deemed it necessary to draw upon a range of documentary sources including: publicly disseminated governmental policy reports and research institute reports, academic journals and conference papers, legislative papers, as well as national budgets and accounts regarding childcare policy provision. Moreover, it emerged that the narratives of various different interest groups concerning policy reform were clearly recorded in the papers relating to public hearings and position statements. Overall, the documentary analysis provided evidence and demonstrated the problems and purposes of the policy process expressed by the various stakeholders.

1.1.2 Applications of the study

The outcomes of this research are potentially of importance for the following two reasons. Firstly, the outcomes of the thesis contribute to theoretical explanations regarding the socialising of care and gender politics and sheds light on the complex relationship between them in the provision of public childcare services. By making a

linkage between these two phenomena this work addresses gender dimensions which should be considered when government is providing care services. With respect to this, caring work itself entails a number of gender issues and the matter of who does caring work and how to provide it has been highlighted among extant studies of care regimes and care arrangements.

With the gradual recognition of a crisis of care in many post-industrial societies, the value of caring work has been increasingly recognised and how to respond to it has become a significant policy item featuring in political agendas. However, the challenge of how to bring gender issues into politics, especially in order to achieve the socialising of care when providing services, remains unresolved. This thesis contributes to the construction of theoretical frameworks regarding how gender considerations may be integrated into politics and how to identify the nature of gender dimensions that should be considered when providing childcare services.

Secondly, this study enhances understanding regarding how gender politics can stimulate policy changes in the provision of public childcare services. Many extant studies on care regimes and arrangements categorise the extent of the distribution of responsibility for caring between the state, market and the family but have tended only to describe the structure of care provision as being linked to the prevailing regime (Baek et al., 2011; J Jenson, 1997; Pfau-Effinger, 2006; Razavi, 2007). These academic works give an indication of the characteristics of the care provision systems for different regimes in a variety of societies, but largely fail to show the reasons underlying why policy shifts in the direction of the socialising of care may have occurred within specific policy contexts. This researcher seeks to develop an analytical framework for investigating the political decision processes involved in bringing about policy changes in providing childcare services whilst highlighting the political barriers and structural limitations that have hindered the development of the socialising of care.

1.2 Outline of the chapters

In Chapter 2, a theoretical positioning of the socialising of care in gender politics is provided for the purposes of identifying the gender issues related to the provision of public childcare. The first section critically reviews the lack of the significance and value attributed to care work under different types of welfare states. Through the review of caregiver models in advanced welfare states, this researcher demonstrates that the discourses surrounding care are key matters that need to be addressed alongside broader social and economic developments in societies. Thus, by drawing on the extant literature, the aim is to produce an ideal approach to care work and how it can be successfully politicised and this followed by a discussion of the political activities that can put care issues on the agenda. In the second section there is an investigation of the key political arguments that have been debated around politicising the issue of care work within the frame of gender politics. The section sets out the indicators for investigating the extent to which gender politics has influenced the socialisation of care for children, which are: identifying the problem and gender issues, exploring policy initiatives for socialisation of care and examining outcomes. Subsequently, these are applied as headings for the empirical chapters in this study. The final section contains an exploration of gender relations to examine how these should be incorporated into the proposed analytical frameworks. The three dimensions aimed at eliciting the gender elements that should be considered when providing care services so as to socialise them in an appropriate manner are proposed in this chapter: affordability, accessibility and autonomy. These are carried forward to subsequent chapters and, more specifically, shape the discussions in the presentations of empirical findings in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter 3 starts with a review of the historical context in South Korea regarding the evolution of social care services and gender politics. The Korean welfare regime has often been termed a Confucian welfare regime (Jones, 1993; Pascall & Sung, 2014; Sung, 2003; Won & Pascall, 2004) that emphasizes the family's role in welfare provision, highlighting in particular the traditional view that it was the responsibility of women to care for children and the elderly. However, the focus of this chapter is an account of the critical social risks that demanded attention from the government in

terms of reshaping the welfare state, particularly in the aftermath of the economic crisis of 1997-1998. These are identified and an assessment given of changes: in the traditional constitution of families, the demographic profile of the nation and the polarising of the labour market. In the final section, the evolution of childcare services is examined and demonstrates the overwhelming dominance of the private sector in South Korea. It appears that the Roh administration, following on from the efforts of the previous government, was confronted with reforming services and publicly provided childcare could be said to have been facing a crossroads at this point.

The research methods chosen for this study are described and justified in Chapter 4. This includes a detailed discussion of the methodological issues that arise when conducting feminist research. More specifically, the limits of traditional methodological approaches with regards to capturing the experiences of women and others who have often been marginalized in academic research are explored. Subsequently, as this study follows an exploratory – explanatory design, first the quantitative phase is discussed and some of the issues arising from the management and analysis of secondary data sets are considered. Following this the qualitative approach which was operationalized through carrying out in-depth interviews and policy documentary analysis is addressed and justified. The qualitative fieldwork techniques are introduced and an explanation of how relevant policymakers, researchers and the representatives of interest groups were interviewed is provided as well as an account of how relevant documentary evidence was collected. The analysis of the data from the in-depth interviews is described, including the initial coding and the investigation of deeper meanings and their significance. Similarly, regarding the policy documentary sources, the processes of analysing the texts in order to compare these with the outcomes of the in-depth interviews are presented.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the empirical evidence of the study. That is, Chapter 5 comprises the quantitative secondary data analysis, whilst Chapters 6 and 7 contain the analyses of the qualitative data. To begin with, the quantitative phase of empirical analysis in Chapter 5, by drawing on the frameworks set out in Chapter 2, explores whether there have been any changes regarding care at two levels: at the point when

the childcare services are finally delivered in institutional settings (the macro) and the actual conditions under which care is carried out and received (the micro level). By undertaking a detailed comparison between selected statistical indicators for the pre and post reform situations, it is possible to shed light on whether the reform of services have been sufficient to achieve a state where it may be concluded that the socialising of care has been achieved in South Korea.

Having briefly glimpsed the outcomes regarding care services post reform, the broad issues that have shaped the wider context regarding the childcare policy reform are presented next in Chapter 6. In this first explanatory chapter, the background to policy reform is discussed in terms of four key policy frames: policy windows, actors, problems and responses. In other words, this chapter sets out: how policies come to be made, who puts them on the policy agenda, and the structure of the institutional arrangements in which the policy is defined and eventually implemented. Accordingly, the political discourses predominant in reforming public childcare services are allowed to emerge. Drawing on the background outlined in Chapter 6, in the following chapter, Chapter 7, the actual policies implemented following the intervention of gender politics are investigated. With regards to this, the competing discourses present in the policy initiation process are narrated and the nature of the policy options that were considered at different points in the trajectory of the emergent policy are evaluated to gauge whether these eventually came to reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes and discrimination in the provision of childcare services.

To draw the study to a close, in Chapter 8 the findings from the empirical chapters are discussed in the light of theory and policy debates. The discussion deploys the frameworks developed in this study and reviews the appropriateness of the direction of the socialising of care policy initiatives that took place in South Korea during the period of study. Moreover, the structural limitations and political barriers which might be said to have obstructed the initial intentions of the government regarding its reform of childcare are identified. The chapter closes with a consideration of limitations to the study, proposals for avenues for future research and conclusions.

Chapter 2: The Socialisation of Care in the Context of Gender Politics

In this chapter, the theoretical position regarding the conceptualisation of socialising care and the notion of gender politics adopted in this study is provided. Further, by making a linkage between these two theoretical ideas, the aim is to propose new dimensions which it is posited should be considered when providing childcare services. To this end, the chapter is divided into three sections with the first given over to tracing how discourses on care and gender have been neglected in mainstream studies regarding welfare states. There is also a discussion of how important consideration of these can be when addressing the care deficit problem that has been brought to the fore by the various social risks that have surfaced in post-industrial societies. In general, the aim in this section is to extend the extant theoretical concepts in relation to the socialising of care to include citizenship as defined by feminist discourses. Secondly, the chapter focuses on how to bring gender issues into politics, particularly with regards to the achievement of the socialising of care in providing care services. That is, the aim in this section is to elaborate on the definition of gender politics and produce an analytical framework for examining the policy-making process with respect to gender issues. Finally, the third section contains an exploration of gender relations to examine how these should be incorporated into the proposed analytical frameworks. That is, it is contended that the different structural limitations men and women experience in employing childcare services in care markets are important and need to be taken into consideration in the subsequent investigation for this thesis. In sum, the content of these three sections help in the development of the analytical framework for the research and are summarised as follows:

1. Competing discourses of care and gender in welfare states: Raising the value of ‘care’ and ‘gender’ in the development of welfare states and conceptualising socialising care.
2. Gender politics advancing the socialising of care: Examining the political efforts for the achievement of the socialising of care and developing the definition of gender politics employed in the first analytical framework.

3. New dimensions in childcare provision: Producing the second analytical framework that is geared towards the exploration of gender relations between men and women in employing formal childcare services in the care market and when undertaking informal care work at home.

2.1 Competing discourses of care and gender in welfare states

Many feminists have argued that mainstream studies about welfare states tend to neglect the values of care and gender and in this section a clear demonstration is given of why these are important and should not be neglected, especially given the context of the deterioration of classical welfare states in post-industrial times. These arguments raise the issue of a care deficit which has been caused by the diverse socio-economic and demographic changes that have been occurring since the late twentieth century. By bringing forward these new social risks in relation to the crisis of care, not only is its significance recognised but also light shed on how the phenomenon of socialising care can be conceptualized in today's advanced societies.

2.1.1 The deterioration of classical welfare states

The notion of classical welfare states advanced under either the Keynes-Beveridge or Bismarck models has two tenets underpinning its development. One is that the labour market could sustain full employment achieved by promoting low unemployment and secure wages. This premise may have been possible when the welfare state was to provide only for those needs which were not adequately met through the market. For instance, those caused by an interruption to income brought about by retirement, unemployment, sickness, or disability, and/or a mismatch between income and need during a certain episode of the life cycle, such as child endowment (P. Taylor-Gooby, 2004a). The other premise is that social provision within a family is based on the relatively stable family type, composed of a male breadwinner, female housewife and any of their dependants. Owing to this assumption regarding the model of a family, the welfare state does not need to provide care services for the children or dependants in a family and therefore, the state's role in this classical welfare state is confined to only responding to specified eventualities or risks, such as ill health and

unemployment, occurring within the confines of the family model (J. E. Lewis, 2006).

However, these assumptions of a welfare state could not be sustained with the coming of post-industrial society. All in all, regarding the assumption of full employment, technological advancements in the labour markets led to job losses for manufacturing workers, especially semi- and unskilled employees, with limitations in relation to job security, such as unstable income, poor terms of retirement and lack of sickness or disability benefits (J Lewis, 2001; J. E. Lewis, 2006; P. Taylor-Gooby, 2004a). Moreover, the economic globalization in the late 1980s brought competition between working class structures in the labour markets as well as employment flexibility. This has resulted in economic growth rates becoming lower and more uncertain in post-industrial societies than newly developing ones, such as those in the Far East and Latin America (Y. M. Kim, 2008; H. Kwon, 2005; H. J. Kwon, 1999; Shin & Shaw, 2003) and the expectation of full employment in the labour market no longer able to be fulfilled (P. Taylor-Gooby, 2004a). Hence, the expectations of the welfare state have expanded exponentially faced with new risks which cannot be covered by the classic welfare schemes. Similarly, the assumption of traditional family life has also not been maintained, in particular because women have become increasingly engaged in the labour market. However although, increased women's employment has led to a change their role in the family from carer to income earner they still retain the role of main caregiver in the family (J Lewis, 2001; J. E. Lewis, 2006; P. Taylor-Gooby, 2004a). In parallel, there has been the erosion of the dichotomy of gender roles in the family - male breadwinner vs. female housewife – as witnessed in classic welfare states. In general, these changing family forms and structures have raised important policy dilemmas for governments concerned about the absence of a full time carer in the family.

Most mainstream comparative research into welfare states has also neglected the issue of gender differences between men and women. For example, Esping-Andersen (1990) focused only on the relationship between the state and the market. Of course, he did reconsider the relationship between the state-market-family in his other study in 1999, but this still focused on the paid worker in the labour market rather than the

unpaid worker and the carer in the family (G Esping-Andersen, 1999). Moreover, this author did include the dimension of stratification of incomes for paid workers, but he did not extend this to consider the effect of social provision by the state on gender relations, especially in relation to the differential treatment of paid and unpaid labour. Finally, the underpinning social right to be de-commodified in welfare states has been largely pursued under the assumption of there being a sexual division of gender roles between men and women with the caring and domestic labour in the family still being presumed as women's work (M. Daly & Rake, 2003; J. Lewis & Giullari, 2005; R. Lister, 2003; Ruth Lister et al., 2007; Pascall & Lewis, 2004; Pfau-Effinger, 2005a, 2005b; Sainsbury, 1999; F. Williams, 2010). Hence, although there was increased recognition of the crisis of caring, the old framework for evaluating the level of de-commodification and stratification became more and more inappropriate.

Another fact which should be noted here is the increase in the absolute and relative numbers of elderly people and the decrease in the fertility rate in advanced welfare states. Regarding this, OECD data shows that the ratio of those aged over sixty-five to the population of working age in Europe is projected to rise by 74 per cent between 2000 and 2030 (OECD, 2001). Moreover, the rates of mortality and fertility have been declining gradually, which will result in low population growth across European societies (Bégeot & Fernandez-Cordon, 1997; Coleman, 1996) and accompanying ageing. In fact, these demographic challenges (P. Pierson, 2001) have substantial implications for the appropriate political responses to such matters as social care, welfare state pensions and health services. In terms of the questions 'who cares for the increased elderly' and 'who contributes to social provision', these demographic changes put pressure on the need to identify new alternative sources, for instance, in relation to how to care for the increasing number of the elderly and how to encourage an increase in child-birth.

2.1.2 New recognition of care and citizenship

As pointed out above, socio-economic and demographic changes in classical welfare states have brought about a crisis (deficit) of caring (P. Taylor-Gooby, 2004a), which cannot be addressed within the old framework of the welfare state (Bonoli, 2005). In

particular, numerous research projects which have compared the different welfare regimes of countries have been criticized by feminists such as O'Connor (1993) who alleged that mainstream studies have fundamental limitations regarding the absence of gender issues and the biased concept of citizenship in comparative welfare states. She tried to integrate class, citizenship and gender in comparative welfare state regimes, and claimed that most welfare policies under the guise of Marshall's citizenship were for only the paid workers (mainly men) in the labour market. That is, this criticism is supported by the fact that the image of the ideal citizen referred mainly to paid workers, generally the organized paid worker in the public sphere (J. S. O'Connor, 1993). Similarly, Orloff (1993) focused on the different forms of mobilization engaged in by men and women when seeking to secure more comprehensive social rights. In this regard, she demonstrated women are likely to be at the forefront of struggles for social provision as their material situation is more precarious than that of men who have greater access to long term paid work. That is, these differences in priorities between men and women determine their different identities and interests whilst striving to extend welfare state provision. Likewise, Pateman (2000) contended that welfare states have been established on the history of the development of employment societies and hence in many cases have excluded the role of women owing to their lack of access to public areas.

Walby (1994) has argued that Marshall's analysis of citizenship rights was very limited given the aforementioned gender-specific assumptions, and failed to take into account the quite different life histories of men and women. Moreover, failure to link women's interests with an entitlement to citizenship has meant their needs have often been excluded from public discussions. As Walby (1994) pointed out, the issues of abortion or giving birth are still controlled by state policy or social pressure rather than being considered as an objective in women's decision-making. In addition, understanding of women's work in the family has been neglected in the theorization of Marshall's citizenship. Thus, a new approach and understanding of care giving and care receiving in modern welfare states is required, one that encompasses socialisation, if appropriate provision for advanced post-industrial societies is to result.

Knijn and Kremer (1997) considered how to bring the concept of caring into the comparative study of welfare states, investigating how care was organized and how gendered citizenship was structured. To address these, they introduced two theoretical dimensions of needs and rights of caregivers and care receivers, focusing on the care services for the elderly and children in three European countries: Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands. They analysed the level of gendered citizenship with two indicators, the right to receive care and the right to time for care (Knijn & Kremer, 1997), concluding that there was substantial difference between the two. More importantly, the recognition of the right to receive care and the time for care must be significant points, since these can be more practical indicators to estimate the level of socialising caring with the reconceptualisation of citizenship.

Similarly, Lister (2003) reconceptualised the concept of citizenship to include the notions of it being woman-friendly and gender-inclusive in terms of welfare provision. In general, the ongoing discourse being hotly debated at the time in feminist works centred on the equality vs. difference dilemma (R. Lister, 2003). However, although this polarisation was a common theme in women's groups, Lister shifted the focus of citizenship to include women's diversity, especially regarding their differing political needs and voices. That is, under this perspective, equal citizenship has to embrace differences between women pluralistically. Within this context, she addressed the competing claims of an ethic of care (or responsibility) and an ethic of justice (or rights) (R. Lister, 2003). Commonly, this dichotomy has been perceived as pertaining to different images of the ideal citizen in welfare societies. That is, the former refers to worthy independent human beings whereas the latter are most likely considered dependent. She criticized this binary assumption, arguing that these two objectives should be united both within and across citizens, rather than being divided amongst them. In other words, she called for a more balanced approach, one that recognises the roles of interdependence and individual autonomy. This perspective also brings into doubt the trichotomy of dependence, independence and interdependence amongst those involved with the giving and receipt of care. Regarding this, she highlighted the need to address the issue of women's economic (in)dependence, which in turn should be related to physical

and emotional independence, for when these interact effectively they can play a significant role in promoting women as autonomous citizens.

To sum up, the classical welfare statism holds two key assumptions: full employment and well-organized social provision. However, people's expectations are increasingly failing to be met owing to the impact of new socio-economic and demographic changes since the emergence of post-industrial societies. These changes have brought new diverse social needs, for example, the need for long-term care for the elderly and work-life balance due to increased women's employment. These issues cannot be effectively addressed within the frameworks of decommodification and stratification pertaining to classical welfare states, because they are limited to the concept of work only as paid work in the labour market. Owing to this biased perspective, the notion of caring work as taken mainly by women in the family has been overlooked as a main indicator for investigating the development of welfare states. In order to address this gap, the new academic concern of 'caring work' involving a critique of the classical welfare state has been raised by feminists such as O'Connor (1993), Orloff (1993) and Pateman (2000). In particular, they have tried to include the dimension of caring into the understanding of welfare states by reconstructing the concept of de-commodification and stratification in the welfare state. These critiques have fundamentally undermined the definition of citizenship conceptualised by Marshall, as well as refuting other hypotheses regarding classical welfare states. Consequently, they are increasingly seen as particularly attractive by feminists for assisting in the establishment a new framework to understand the development of welfare states, especially in the area of their comparative study (Knijn & Kremer, 1997; R. Lister, 2003; A. Orloff, 1993).

2.1.3 Conceptualisation of socialising care

Having considered the theoretical contestations in relation to welfare states and their different stakeholders, the aim of this section is to define the concept of the socialising of care so as to then be able to consider ways of addressing the aforementioned care crisis of post-industrial societies. That is, the interest is to identify the inherent drivers for the socialisation of care by assessing how programmes aimed at addressing the above described care crisis have fared in recent

years as well as investigating the different perspectives adopted regarding care provision. As will become apparent in the next section, the political responses for resolving the care crisis and their outcomes have varied substantially across countries (Michel & Mahon, 2002; F. Williams, 2010). As a consequence of this diverse range of care policies, no overriding concept that is universally accepted has emerged to help tackle the increasingly looming crisis of this provision. Therefore, in order to understand these different responses and outcomes, it becomes necessary to investigate the different political mechanisms that shape the changes and dynamics across countries, thus leading to these diverse outcomes.

Moreover, in order to understand these different political responses, it is also necessary to consider that care provision in many welfare states has been transformed by the introduction of privatisation which stresses neo-liberal ideas about competition and decentralised authority. Savas and Schubert (1987, p. 3) defined this tendency for care provision to be subject to privatisation as “the act of reducing the role of government, or increasing the role of the private sector, in an activity or in the ownership of assets”. The logic of privatisation typically argues that public institutions are ineffective and wasteful in providing care services so that having competition with decentralised control is the better way to organise care provisions (Stolt, Blomqvist, & Winblad, 2011). The term privatisation can be used alongside additional terminology describing the ‘marketisation’ of care provision, which refers to the governmental measures and the ways in which these function to introduce market mechanisms in order to allocate care provision (Brennan, Cass, Himmelweit, & Szebehely, 2012). This marketisation of care tends to create relationships between buyers and sellers by contracting service delivery and financing users to purchase services in the care market as well as often mandating personal insurance against social risks, such as the need for long-term care. Moreover, the giving of subsidies or providing cash allowances or (and) vouchers are often adopted as mechanisms designed to shape consumer behaviour within this marketisation. For instance in the case of care, vouchers may be redeemable only from certain kinds of care provision, or the value of vouchers may be set so low that recipients tend to keep them and in effect, become low-paid workers. In some situations, service users may be entitled to top up public subsidies in order to

purchase additional or higher quality of services through making private financial contributions (ibid). Therefore, it is apparent that these market-oriented policies have become instrumental in shaping care users and care providers in the care market as consumers and sellers within the concept of care being a commodity to be bought and sold.

This political direction of the marketisation of care often overshadows carers' citizenship especially recognising the right of receiving care and having time for care, as discussed earlier (see section 2.1.2 in this chapter). With this marketisation of care, the citizenship of carers tends to be eclipsed by the assumption of there being an economic relationship between caregivers and care providers in the care market and the pursuit of self-interests among the individual sellers in the markets are embedded (Clarke, Newman, Smith, Vidler, & Westmarland, 2007 cited in Brennan et al, 2012). Indeed, private entrepreneurs prioritise economic revenues instead of maintaining high quality of services (Stolt et al., 2011). Nevertheless, in many Western welfare states, even in Sweden, recent preceding decades have been characterised by an increasing trend for establishing privatisation in the public sector regardless of the political regime (Stolt et al., 2011) and this promotion of markets in care provision is part of a broader suite of changes in state-society relations (Brennan et al., 2012). Therefore, the role of the market has become a significant factor when seeking to understand the various policy responses and thus the diverse outcomes in the nature of care practice in which care is carried out and received. Given the context of the marketisation of care, Michel and Mahon (2002) attempted to propose some general criteria regarding childcare services in terms of their potential contribution to gender equality, but they did not extend this perspective to cover the notion of the socialisation of care, and they only alluded to gender equality in using care services. However, they did stress that an effective care service should be universally accessible, affordable and involved high-quality non-parental care as well as being provided by skilled trainers sited in appropriate working conditions.

In this research, the concept of socialising care pertains to both progressive new changes in policy direction as well as outcomes in care practice brought about by the sharing of responsibilities for such work between the state, market and the family.

Moreover, it is posited here that the feminist critique of citizenship, the care gap and the responsibility for undertaking caring work should be reconsidered by linking it to the interplay between the state, market and the community. Although the concept of socialising care in this study mainly focuses on childcare services, the purview also includes the services for the elderly and unpaid carers. Given these targets, the policies for socialising care should embrace not only the care services but also social security benefits or tax systems, which support care givers and those in need of care. Williams (2010)¹ has even proposed that such provision should include cash payments or credits to the caregivers or to the person who needs care support. These state interventions emphasise the fact that care policies do not exist in isolation but are tied to other institutional arrangements, such as the policies of the labour market or the tax system. According to the ‘warm modern model’ by Hochschild (2003), the ideal type of socialising care involves sharing care work between society and the family. Certainly, it does not mean 24 hour day-care for children without any caring by their parents within the family, for they should be able to devote sufficient time for taking care of their dependants in the family while still working in the labour market. That is, the effective socialising of care requires political intervention in terms of labour market policy that guarantees the necessary time for caregivers to be able to provide for their dependants within the family.

Under these integrated presumptions, the socialisation of care is conceptualized as a discourse change around the issue of caring work, which introduces the idea of it being a public responsibility rather than solely being a private matter. This competing discourse is geared towards bringing political intervention that optimises the sharing of responsibility for caring work between the state, market and the family as well as between men and women within the lattermost. That is, the conceptualization of socialising care is informed by understanding within the particular contexts of the triangular relationships between the state, market and family as well as the relationships between men and women within kinship ties

¹ There are controversial debates on which kind of payments are more gender sensitive or could contribute to gender equality, among feminist groups. However, these arguments are not addressed in this research, because the study aims to investigate the political process regarding gender issues, rather than to judge each policy intervention in terms of gender perspectives.

(Figure 2-1) (Blomqvist, 2004; Brennan et al., 2012; Fraser, 1997; Mahon, 2002; Meyers & Gornick, 2003; Stolt et al., 2011). According to such authors, the functions of those involved in care provision as follows:

- *State* as a care provider whereas *family* as a care receiver: services should be provided to everyone who needs the care service as a universal right regardless of their economic situation, gender or even race; the services should be supported by the central government and (or) local government
- *Family* as a care purchaser whereas *market* as a care provider: services should be provided with universal access and uniform services by the professional paid care workers within the country
- *Market* as a care provider whereas *state* as a care regulator: service should be provided with high quality level of services and affordable service costs
- *Men and Women* as an informal care giver within the family: services should be designed to encourage the equal responsibility for caring between men and women within the family

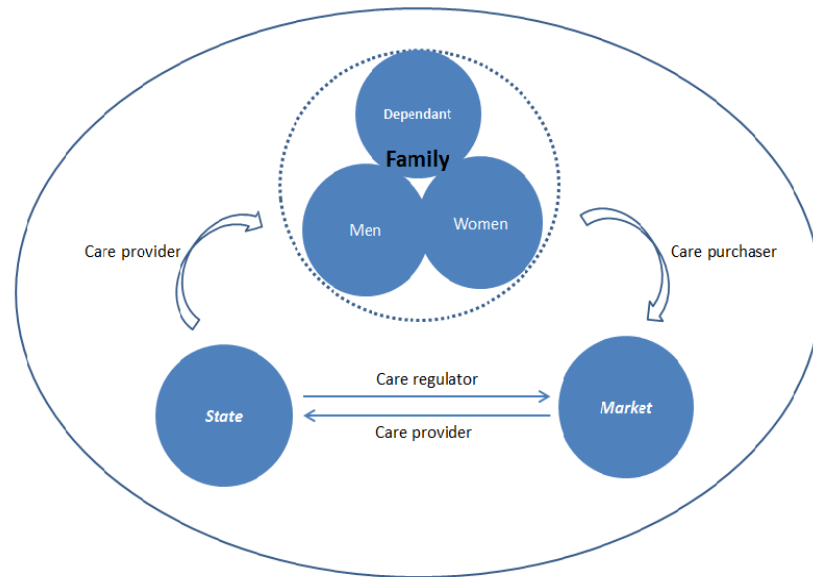


Figure 2-1 This diagram describing the socialising of care is based on the triangular relationships between the state, the market and the family

2.2 Gender politics advancing the socialisation of care

Political experience aimed at the socialisation of care is most apparent in Scandinavian welfare states. This section reviews those political experiences and expects to discover a common factor, which has enabled these developments. There is substantial evidence for these countries that the policy agenda, especially that related to care policy, has been underpinned by concerns about gender equality. Regarding this, some empirical studies have indicated that gender sensitive decision making in these countries has promoted relatively advanced care systems involving the socialising of informal care, when compared to other countries. That is, an awareness and sensitivity of gender in the political process would appear to have driven the advanced care policies towards the goal of fully socialised care (Ellingsæter & Leira, 2006; Kamerman & Moss, 2009; Melby, Ravn, & Wetterberg, 2009; Michel & Mahon, 2002). This section therefore investigates the political construction and the nature of the recognition of gender issues that have led to the aforementioned achievements and others, which come under the heading of gender

politics. Subsequently, having defined gender politics through this process, how to incorporate this approach into an analytical framework is discussed.

2.2.1 Political effort forward to politicising care

Over the last 30 years, academic research on care has come under a number of overlapping paradigms, and these have never been far from the politics of care (F Williams, 2001). One of them is exemplified in Michel and Mahon's (2002) attempt to examine the various forces contesting the most appropriate forms (if any) of non-parental child care. As they were especially concerned with the possibility of outcomes that favour gender (and class) equality, they paid particular attention to the role played by feminists. These academic debates appear to have encouraged the political concern with the caring issue (Michel & Mahon, 2002; F Williams, 2001), and in recent years policymakers have started to implement new social care services based on gender relations. For instance, a recent political effort in EU countries has tried to inspire female employment with more attention to the provision of childcare, even in countries where this has been historically a low policy priority (J. E. Lewis, 2006). Moreover, in order to address this crisis of caring in the family there have been calls for a "modernization" of family-support policies involving an improved work-life balance in Europe (Kaufmann, 2002; Thévenon, 2011).

These political and academic interests have been raised with the aim of understanding the issue of the caring burden within the family as a public issue. Thevenon (2011) examined differences in state support to families across countries using recent OECD family data (the three main types of support being: leave entitlement, cash transfers and provision of services) (Thévenon, 2011) and showed those with pro-family policies that seem to strike a balance that is favourable to both women's employment and fertility. Work and family reconciliation policies are on the political agenda of a growing number of Western countries (Ahn and Mira 2002; D'Addio and Mira d'Ercole, 2005). In particular, there is growing awareness of the importance of formal care strategies for children, especially from a work/family point of view, within the European Union. This has risen to a high point on the European social agenda owing to women's increasing rate of participation in the labour force, changing family forms, and the demographic pressure from an aging

population. However, as yet, there is no common European policy in this respect, with a review of the available literature indicating that national provision is often fragmented, occasionally inconsistent and highly diverse, ranging from tax deductions to free transport to use child care facilities and childcare services (Tine Rostgaard and Torben Fridberg 1998; OECD 2001).

It is true that this politicisation of care work, and gender equality were closely linked. In particular, from the 1970s onwards, gender equality became an important part of the welfare state model in the Scandinavian countries, and legislation for socialising care was passed to this end. This widely accepted approach to care policies has been relatively successful when compared to other European countries, in terms of gender equality and the reconciliation of work and home life. For instance, the Nordic countries have the highest scores on the United Nations' gender equality indexes, the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), which measure the gender distribution of welfare and access to economic / power resources, respectively, thereby revealing that the issue of politicising care including childcare and gender equality have taken centre stage in their politics. Moreover, there is clear evidence that welfare state intervention in gender and family arrangements has been more widely accepted, indeed expected, in social democratic Scandinavia than in states of a liberal or conservative bent (Leira, 2002).

2.2.2 The diverse political responses for socialising care

These political efforts of rethinking care in Europe are embedded in different social and political cultures (Knijn & Kremer, 1997; J. O'Connor, 1993). That is, although there is a rising demand for defamilised care provision common across Western Europe, its politicisation (J. E. Lewis, 2006) and the introduction of care-related social rights are at very different stages. For instance, in Germany, the Federal Government and Länder have long promoted the 'choice' for mothers of young children to stay at home or to enter employment, and mothers continue to express a preference for part-time work (Parent-Thirion, Fernández Macías, J, & G, 2007). In addition, the tax system there is still not individualised (Dingeldey, 2001). Even in Scandinavian countries, the policy patterns for socialising care have diverged. For example, the new Danish government in 2002, just after taking office, abolished the

two weeks of fathers' leave in the parental leave arrangement and extended the period of maternity leave from 26 to 52 weeks. Borchorst (2006) criticised this policy development for failing to consider the individual choices of mothers and fathers in practical caring as well as for shifting the focus away from employers' attitudes towards men opting for parental leave (Borchorst, 2006, p. 101). Similarly, Ellingsæter (2006) alleged that the recent policy reform in Norway is a 'hybrid' type combining dual-earner support with traditional breadwinner elements, including generous cash transfers to families (Ellingsæter, 2006, p. 121).

These similarities and differences in responding to the care issues between countries have been widely discussed (Michel & Mahon, 2002; Rostgaard, 2002; Thévenon, 2011), in particular in comparative studies covering such as the: '*care regime*' (Jensen, 1997), '*care arrangement*' (Pfau-Effinger, 2005a, 2005b) and the '*care diamond*' (Razavi, 2007). Among these studies, Pfau-Effinger (2006) depicted the main features of change in informal care in welfare state policies, especially in terms of cultural values, arguing that political changes interact in different ways for different forms of welfare states. She categorized trends into three different directions, firstly a shift towards the area of formal paid work, secondly, the creation of new semi-formal types of paid care work, and finally, a 'commodification' of care without it having been formalised in the form of undeclared work. Moreover, she pointed out that these processes might not all run in the same direction. That is, care can become both more formalised and more informal at the same time, although this kind of development has not predominated so far, at least with regard to developments in Western Europe (Pfau-Effinger, 2006).

Anottonen and Silpia (1996) raised the fundamental question: 'Is it possible to identify caring regimes?' in response to *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, of Esping-Andersen (1990). They subsequently demonstrated the possibility of exploring the care regimes of European welfare states by considering their social care services provision. In fact, they criticised the ignorance of the value of social care services as an analytical indicator by researchers for comparing the level of the development of welfare states in terms of Esping-Andersen's theoretical indicators of de-commodification and stratification. Moreover, their study contributed to bringing

the aspect of care recipients into the discussion of welfare states. After considering the varying access to social care services across different nations, they concluded that this was a significant indicator of the level of development of welfare states, for it revealed the extent of independence from the family for care-givers and care-receivers. Notwithstanding this, this study did not provide substantial evidence of their being any impact of social provision by the state on gender relations. That is, it seems that the level and extent of responsibility and redistribution between the state, market and family in providing social care services is not related to the alleviation of the burden of caring and the changes of gender relations in a family. Later, Bettio and Plantenga (2004) raised the question as to whether the mix of care provision in each country adds up to a certain strategy and hence, whether it is indeed possible to identify models of care. They came to the conclusion that these earlier works were not robust, because clustering care regimes had been analysed within too limited a range of indicators, but they did accept that clustering helps in the focusing on some important aspects of provision as it allows for the identification of similarities and differences.

The above shows that there have been dynamic academic discourses and diverse political responses between countries around the issue of informal care, but there has been scant scholarship into why the latter is the case. That is, although some researchers have demonstrated the process of politicizing care issues, there has been little research on the reasons for the varied responses to the identified needs. Those studies that there have been have investigated the nature of gendered division of paid and unpaid care work and how this varies across Western European countries. Lewis (1992) focused on the position of feminists within each country in relation to the development of the following two ideas, firstly, why unpaid work (caring work) must be incorporated into paid work and secondly, why there have been different ways and degrees in modifying the models which have been grouped historically. Orloff (1993) also emphasized the importance of women's agency in politics to address gender issues in the development of welfare states, pointing out that this can have a strong positive impact, even though it has been often overlooked. Apart from Lewis and Orloff, other feminist scholars such as Wilson, McIntosh and Abramovitz, pointed out that welfare states have mainly been functional for patriarchy and

capitalism, with social policies reflecting relations involving dominance and exploitation (Abramovitz, 1996; McIntosh, 1978; Wilson, 1977).

Michel & Mahon (2002) analysed the similarities and differences in the provision of child care in thirteen countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): Japan, Spain, Australia, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Canada, Britain, the United States, Denmark, Sweden and Quebec. They found that there has been common pressure created by the erosion of the male-breadwinner / female homemaker model in all of these countries, but there has been a wide range of responses. Regarding this, these authors highlighted that ‘the politics of care’ by feminists has been debated differently in different nations. They particularly analysed the effect of a public guarantee of universal access to high quality child care, provided by caregivers earning equitable wages as is the case in some countries and concluded that these indicators are of critical value to any solution aimed at simultaneously pursuing gender and class equality. Similarly, Stratigaki (2004, 2005) emphasized the important role of political groups and parties involved with the political process of reform. In particular, she regretted that some agendas of gender equality are not equally treated by policy drivers, as similar to other equal rights issues, they often just remain as rhetorical slogans (Stratigaki, 2004, 2005). In general, these studies show how the politics of care has been driven in different directions by feminist groups, with different kinds of issues coming to the surface and that the paths taken depend whether those countries follow market-based solutions or male bread winner family ones. However, the framework indicators describing the political process in these extant studies were not robust enough for comprehending each country’s political process and not always abundant enough to persuade the research field of the reasons why the indicators were significant.

2.2.3 Bringing gender into politics

In spite of the above discussed drawbacks in relation to the prior research, it is still considered appropriate to refer to these studies to seek insights into the political construction of the policy-making process regarding the degree to which care has been socialised in various countries. The political experience of the Scandinavian countries, in particular has shown that bringing gender into the equation has been the

most significant determinant for accomplishing this socialisation. This political effort, termed by some as gender politics (Ellingsæter & Leira, 2006; J Jenson & Mahon, 1993; Kamerman & Moss, 2009; Leira, 2006; Melby et al., 2009; Szebehely, 1998), represents the endeavour to bring gender issues into political debates and thereby seek to make differences that address imbalances between men and women. This raises the matter of how the concept of gender politics can be incorporated into this current study on care provision as a theoretical framework as well as a methodological tool. There have been academic discussions aimed at asserting the importance of gender perspectives in the policy making process, but these have been mainly theoretical and inter-disciplinary, drawing together ideas, methodologies and concerns that have conventionally been located within discrete disciplinary (Squires, 2000).

Early feminist discussions of gender and politics exposed mainstream political theory as having a highly gendered nature, whereby women were often excluded from political life by patriarchal construction (Lovenduski, 1981; Pateman, 1989). Indeed, during the so-called Golden Age after 1945, welfare regimes had clear gendering effects that followed as a direct consequence of relying on the male breadwinner as the citizenship norm (Hernes, 1988). This perspective was underpinned by the acceptance that a welfare state should be based on the assumption of gender differences between men and women. For example, women should be given the responsibility of caring for their family, whereas men were to have the rights of the family that were subject to public and rational assessment, which would result in a heterosexual family with a male-breadwinner and female-housewife (Pateman, 1988). Lovenduski (1981) claimed that the dominant conception of political studies at the time was bound to exclude women, since they assumed that women usually were not disposed to public power, did not belong to political elites nor hold influential positions in government institutions. Similarly, Pateman (1989) pointed out that to the vast majority, women's issues were outside the proper concerns of political study, as their private matters had been systematically excluded from general theorising by the patriarchal constructions of the time.

This perspective leads to the conclusion that mainstream political theory has been masculinised and women's issues have been undermined, thus ignoring the gender and politics dimension. In general, the concept of gender politics could be found at the time in the theoretical background of the relationship between 'gender' and 'state', called 'state feminism'. This, as Howell (1998) explained, referred the activists and policies of structures within the state, which were set up officially for the purpose of promoting women's interests and rights. However, Carver (1999) contended that this definition of gender politics should be broadly conceptualised and co-defined with other concepts, for example, class, race/ethnicity and localised cultures.

During the 1990s, gender politics came to the fore over the issue of care, with the political agenda regarding this in Western European welfare states being intensely debated. That is, with increasing the recognition that gender is integral to care, it became impossible to imagine a genderless discussion on this (Siim, 2000; Squires, 2000). In all Western democracies, the various feminist movements put gender equality with respect to care on the political agenda, challenging the divisions between public and private, paid work and care and between equality and difference. With time, these new movements emerged as supranational forums, involving transnational NGOs, international forums and networks, shaping the discursive resources and types of claim making into new social movements. The UN conferences held in Cairo in 1994 and in Beijing in 1995 are such examples. Moreover, feminist scholarship has been inspired by these developments to reconceptualize the link between civil society, the market and the state (Hobson, Lewis and Siim, 2002). Global restructuring has also had an impact on feminist theorizing regarding the public and private spheres, and the sites of resistance against gender inequalities. For women in the transition countries of Eastern Europe, the collapse of communism accelerated global restructuring and this has resulted in heated debates around the role of the state as a potential ally for women's movements in those countries (Hobson, Lewis, & Siim, 2002) ².

² Comparative empirical research works on the assumption that different welfare states respond differently to the forces of globalization, and until now there have been relatively strong path dependences in the way in which European welfare regimes express different policy logics, with

These movements were explained by Sperling in terms of gender politics by drawing on the ‘political opportunity structure’ for women’s movement organizations in Moscow after the beginning of perestroika (Sperling, 1998, p. 143). Sperling (1998) defined political opportunity structure as a multi-dimensional concept enabling the analysis of some of the reasons for a social movement’s success or failure, by drawing on work by McAdam (1996:27), which included four elements; *1) the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system, 2) the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity, 3) the presence or absence of elite allies, 4) the state’s capacity and propensity for repression* (McAdam, 1996 cited in Sperling 1998:144). Gender politics, accordingly, could be defined as presenting the relationship between women and the state as a mutual engagement or interrogation, in which to an extent power or influence circulates (Waylen, 1998). More practically, Squires (2007) identified three key strategies (quotas, policy agencies and mainstreaming) that have come to represent the increasingly widespread commitment to gender equality within the political sphere, being concerned with parity of political participation, and the resulting emergence of an institutional mechanism for promoting the political equality of women. In general, these three strategies focus on presence, voice and process, respectively (Squires, 2007, p. 12). Indeed, although they are clearly different, they have generally been advocated as mutually reinforcing ways of securing greater political equality between women and men and they represent a distinctive approach towards gender equality (Squires, 2000).

Orloff and Palier (2009) extended this perspective by setting out to identify the ideal dynamics in policy development in order provide a deeper understanding of policy-making processes that had previously illuminated by interest- and institutional-based analysis. Regarding this, these authors contended that intellectual processes, in

feminist scholarship having shown how they also embody different relations between the: state, market and the family. We have already noted that increasing flexibilisation in the labour market and individualization as a result of both labour market and family change create problems and possibilities for women. In regard to paid work / care, feminist scholarship has identified a shift in the labour market to including mothers (Lewis, 2000, 2001). This has politicised the paid work / care nexus and has arguably opened new possibilities to place the work / care relation on the political agenda and expand public services for children and the elderly. The inclusion of women in the labour market represents a shift in policy logic towards an adult worker model that has huge implications for the politics of care.

particular, the role of knowledge in politics, is important for influencing change in policy paradigms. Padamsee (2009) and Beland (2009) also argued that the current changes within welfare systems are of a paradigmatic nature, and therefore it is important to include the analysis of ideas, discourses, ideologies and culture when analysing policy changes and advancements. Unfortunately, a framework for providing a broader understanding the role of such ideas, discourses and paradigms in policy and politics has yet to be fully developed. So far, feminist approaches for analysing social policy have tended to focus on only women in one of two institutional sites: parliament or women's policy agencies, defined as 'institutional arrangements inside democratic states devoted to women's policy questions' (Stetson & Mazur, 1995 cited by Annesley 2010, p. 51). It is certainly important to put women's political activity in the context of the institutional configuration of a particular political system. This is especially the case, where policy-making is dominated by the core executive and policy networks as well as corporatist decision-making systems, where decisions are traditionally thrashed out between social partners before they reach parliament. However, these institutions are frequently poorly resourced, weakly institutionalized and easily dismantled when the political landscape changes, and hence although such an approach is valid, on its own it is often hard to track the institutional impact on a continual basis. Moreover, studies that have analysed policy-making procedures have tended to only consider the links with the feminist movement rather than observing all the actors involved in the formal political process. That is, this rather blinkered approach overlooks the manner in which actors in different institutional sites interact, cooperate and coordinate action to attain their goals, by confining policy change investigation to feminist issues, such as: abortion, prostitution or domestic violence, based on women's political representation.

While not denying the significance of such studies, their limitation is that they are not able to interpret the impact of female political actors on mainstream areas, such as economic or welfare state policies, which carry significant budgetary and fiscal consequences and are more complex to push through. In other words, they cannot forge connections between women's issues and mainstream changes in politics. Regarding the general political arena, it is true that family policy has become a major

issue given the above described concerns in relation to the changes in the labour market and the worsening demographic crisis manifesting themselves as social risks in post-industrial society. Due to these circumstances, recent family policy innovations in many countries have taken a different track to previously, involving changes in the forces, dynamics and agents. Mätzke and Ostner (2010) allocated these changes to four determining categorizations: (1) demographic pressure arising from socio economic change and the power resources of organized interests; (2) institutional constraints caused by power resources and institutionalized influences of political politics; (3) normative integration of public opinion as observed in mass attitudes and (4) rhetoric action driven by epistemic communities. This perspective locates gender politics within the wider socio-economic and political context.

One of the most striking recent policy changes in European countries as well as emerging welfare states, including South Korea, has been driven by the discourse of social investment. This perspective in European countries was already central to policy reforms by 1945, but in South Korea was only introduced from the mid-1990s, especially when neoliberalism was challenged by alternative ideas about economic and social relations. The goals of social investment were originally to increase social inclusion and minimize the intergenerational transfer of poverty as well as to ensure that the population was well prepared for the likely changes in employment opportunities (less job security; more precarious forms of employment) of contemporary economies (J. Jenson, 2009; A. S. Orloff & Palier, 2009). In other words by linking welfare expenditure to investment and hence tying it with economic planning, this perspective was consistent with the rhetoric that dominated the South Korean political scene. Consequently, under the Korean government (especially Roh's administration 2003-2007), this approach even extended it to cover understanding of different gender needs as well as the unequal gendering effects of employment and family life (Y.-s. Kim, 2007).

However, there is still doubt as to whether current perspectives on social investment include enough understanding of gender issues. That is, although the social investment approach emphasizes social expenditure on women and children, it has resulted in the adoption of a somewhat instrumental view, merely considering them

in terms of their asset to society. That is, although under this perspective the right of access to paid work through universal childcare services and active policy for the labour market has been championed, the sharing of responsibility for caring work in the family between men and women as well as family and society has been ignored. Given this lack of concern, it would appear that proponents of this policy drive are not interested in the citizenship rights of informal carers. Indeed, Lewis (2001) and Rake (2001) alleged that the gender policy regime during the Blair government in the UK, which advocated a social investment state, produced the one and a half adult worker model rather than an individual earner-carer regime (Sainsbury, 1999) or the adult worker model (Lewis, 2001), with both men and women involved with earning and caring (J Lewis, 2001; Rake, 2001). This implies that it is important to sustain gender sensitive perspectives in macro political discourse and to be able to criticise whether this has produced the right outcomes (A. S. Orloff & Palier, 2009). This viewpoint as to whether the initial goals in favour of a fairer society for men and women are central to the investigation in this thesis.

Mackay et al. (2010) tried to bring gender issues into a macro political theory in order to find the significance of the synthesis of the feminist approach and new institutionalism. The latter perspective has allowed for a greater understanding about the co-constitutive nature of politics: the various ways in which actors bring about or resist change in institutions; and the way institutions shape the nature of actors' behaviour through the construction of rules, norms and policies. Mackay and her colleagues argued that the synthesis of institutionally focused feminist scholarship and 'new institutionalism' into a feminist institutionalism has considerable potential to provide insights into institutional dynamics, gender power and the patterning of gendered inequalities in political life. They expect ideally that this approach would lead to tools and frameworks being made that will enable feminists to capture better the multiple dynamics of continuity and change pertaining to such matters as: informal institutions, critical junctures, path dependency, feedback mechanisms, and institutional conversion, layering, drift and erosion (Mackay, Kenny, & Chappell, 2010). While not denying the significance of such a broad approach to understanding relevant political involvement and circumstances, these authors have yet to articulate this perspective into a framework that can be subject to empirical analysis.

Consequently, this research seeks to address this issue by producing an analytical framework, which investigates the political contexts in relation to policy agendas with a gender sensitive perspective. That is, the aim is to draw upon the above literature to employ gender issues arising in public discourse as an analytical framework for examining the aspect of gender politics. Included in this framework are the political steps taken towards promoting gender awareness in policy agendas and the policy decision making process. Given this goal, the next section puts forward how to investigate these political processes and those outcomes that imply gender sensitive perspectives.

2.2.4 Developing the analytical framework

Three stages are deemed necessary in order to develop the aforementioned analytical framework. The first is centred on the way care issues are dealt with rather than focusing on the actors and agencies involved (Squires, 2007). Regarding the latter point, prior research has revealed that interested stakeholders, in particular politicians, have tended to raise gender issues in order to increase their popularity or to obtain political benefits (Béland, 2009). It is contended here that these superficial actions regarding gender have failed to grasp a full understanding of gender sensitive perspectives and have hence led to their inappropriate inclusion in policy agendas or their having been overlooked. Consequently, the focus here is on defining the problems encountered and specifying the related gender issues as this will form a robust platform for developing gender sensitive analysis of policy implementation processes, because policy choices emerge from the identification of such problems (Béland, 2009; Jane Jenson, 2004).

Nevertheless, identifying the actors and interest groups who have been deeply involved with the relevant decision making processes is also inevitably tied in with the issues and problems considered. Systematic indicators, for instance, falling federal expenditures and the lack of governmental budgets could be one of starting points to consider the issues of interest (Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Kingdon, 1995). That is, knowing who cares about a problem and who brings it onto the agenda can provide information about their stance on the issue at hand and how they perceive it should be moved forward. In many nations, the role of the president or other national

leader is that of having executive power over the policy agenda and “obviously, when a president sends up a bill, it takes first place in the queue. All other bills take second place.” (Kingdon, 1995, p. 23). Consequently, the strong will of the person in this position, in favour of a certain policy agenda, can contribute to bringing a new “national mood” within a new administration (Kingdon, 1995, p. 146). Such a policy environment is conducive to the creation of informed debate to address the problems at hand.

This component of the national mood instigated by a nation’s leader is usually enthusiastically engaged with by officials in government departments usually appointed by that person, having their own authority to take practical action to resolve the problems under consideration. Among politicians both elected and unelected and of interest to this research endeavour the role of ‘femocrats’ has been strongly influential in bringing gender issues into the political arena (Dahlerup, 2003; Krook & Squires, 2006). However, their achievements are used to being judged by descriptive representation, such as the number of female politicians or women’s agencies involved in decision making processes. It might be true that women’s increased entry into politics has brought contemporary social politics with gender sensitivity, but this does not necessarily imply that it has led to a gender sensitive policy making process. That is, the ability to facilitate women’s issues depends on substantive representation that introduces a gender perspective into the policy making process and works for irreversible women’s advancement, rather than simply counting numbers (Annesley, 2010; A. S. Orloff & Palier, 2009; Squires, 2007). Hence, the first step of the analytical framework for investigating policy making decision processes with a gender sensitive perspective, should embrace the way issues are being dealt with, bearing in mind the strong power of a country’s leader and the efforts of femocrats to move this agenda forward.

Second, the policy initiatives taken in response to the identified problems need to be included in the framework as these frequently reflect shared assumptions about how to solve them (De Beauvoir, 2010 cited in Squires 1999). It is also often the case that there are cultural assumptions or stereotypical beliefs entailed when considering the policy alternatives, in particular regarding gender issues (Kingdon, 1995; Stone,

1997; Linda A White, 2002). That is, policymakers typically borrow from various sources in order to construct specific policy alternatives termed policy paradigms (Béland, 2009), which are cognitive belief systems that articulate the goals of political actors with policy initiatives, and instruments aimed at addressing concrete social and economic problems (Annesley, 2010; Béland, 2009; Hall, 1993). However, shifts in policy paradigms cannot be achieved when a dominant national ideology pervades that accepts that the governmental status quo still has command over the policy agenda (Kingdon, 1995). Therefore, when exploring policy initiatives, how the available options reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes and systematic discrimination as well as the paradigm shifts underpinning any policy initiatives should be investigated.

In addition, it should be acknowledged that when policy ideas ‘bump into one another, they combine with one another’ (Kingdon, 1995, p. 131). Regarding this, White (2011) explained how the debates about childcare education have been framed as an internationalised policy agenda by diverse global organizations. Indeed, there have been various ideas promulgated in relation to the correct approach to policy on childcare education, including: human capital development, the social pedagogical approach to the child, children’s rights, labour market participation strategy and so on (L.A. White, 2011). As discussed earlier in this chapter, attention to childcare policy in recent years has been stimulated by changes in demographic structures owing to: increased ageing, a decreased fertility rate, change in family formation and an altered labour market along with increased women’s empowerment in post-industrial societies. As a result of these links to other social policies, the policy alternatives for resolving shortfalls in childcare have been brought into the arenas of: family policy, taxation as well as work life balance debates, in particular regarding maternity/parental leave (Jane Jenson, 2004; J Jenson & Saint-Martin, 2006; J. Lewis, 2006; A. S. Orloff & Palier, 2009; L.A. White, 2011).

However, new policy changes are difficult to introduce into the political arena and such initiatives are often likely to be distorted to be consistent with the prevailing ideological norm. Not only dominant national ideology but also governmental inertia, tends to lead to existing policy patterns being maintained, thus obstructing change

(Kingdon, 1995). This tendency of retaining the prevailing policy regime has been termed ‘path dependency’ in welfare state studies (G. Esping-Andersen, 1990; P. Pierson, 1996). Regarding this phenomenon, the case of marketisation of care provision is an illustrative example. That is, in Nordic and liberal care regimes, such as Sweden and England, respectively, according to Brennan et al. (2012) the trajectory of marketisation has been different. In England, private markets have been the tool for governments to encourage service expansion, while decreasing publicly provided care, whereas in Sweden marketisation of care was introduced to challenge a public monopoly and extend users’ choice. These differentiated paths probably originated from the existing political and institutional arrangements, whereby liberal economics has led to the extension of privatisation in England, whereas the portion of for-profit childcare in Sweden still represents only a small figure owing to long term social democratic traditions (Brennan et al., 2012). Therefore, the framework will take into account the national ideology and structural barriers which hinder new policy directions as well as any paradigm shifts underpinning emergent policy initiatives.

Thirdly, the framework will include the nexus between anticipated outcomes and the real impact on care practices. That is, the aim is to assess whether the expected outcomes during the implementation of the policy initiatives match up to the actual care practice after the policy intervention. Regarding this, decision makers tend to be eager point to budgetary constraints as the reason why certain policy initiatives are abandoned or scaled down and hence it is important to examine whether gender issues appear to take a Cinderella role amongst the range of welfare policies. Moreover, often political collusion occurs between politicians and lobby-groups, which results in policy outcomes diversifying from those originally intended. This type of collusion is promoted by “policy groupies” who like participating so as to reap “solidarity” benefits (Kingdon, 1995, p. 123) and it is important in this thesis to probe in which ways their actions affect the care policy agenda (Annesley, 2010; Kingdon, 1995).

To sum up, the meaning of gender politics in this study is conceptualised as a political endeavour pertaining to bringing a gender dimension into the policy making

process. Table 2.1 sets out the indicators and key questions for investigating the extent to which gender politics has influenced the socialisation of care for children, in this case in South Korea, in accordance with the above discussion.

Table 2-1 Three indicators for analysing gender politics and the key questions

Identifying the problem & gender issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What problem/s was/were identified? • What was the relevant gender issue discussed? • Why did it become an issue? • What was the root cause? • What factors were influencing this issue?
Exploring policy initiatives for socialisation of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the initiatives proposed? • What was the anticipated outcome? • What was the desired outcome? • How far did the outcomes of the initiatives match those desired? • How did the initiatives influence or change the factors affecting the issue? • What were the direct and/or indirect implications of each policy option for welfare provision? • Were there unintended outcomes? • What factors affected the implementation of each option? • Who proposed the initiative options? • How did the options reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes and systemic discrimination? • Was there a paradigm shift underpinning the policy initiatives and if so what form did it take?
Examining outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the desired outcome achieved? • If the gender role between men and women changed, how did this manifest itself? • Was the care balance between the state and the family shifted in favour of the former? • To what extent did the policy intervention influence care practice?

2.3 New dimensions in care provision

In the previous section it was contended that it is indispensable to bring gender issues into politics and how those issues could be discussed during the political process is addressed in the above table. In particular, this research focuses on the impact of those political endeavours defined ‘gender politics’ in the achievement of socialising care. The understanding of socialising care in this work refers to the ‘sharing of responsibility for caring’ between family and society as well as men and women, rather than giving the care burden to only women or the family. As argued earlier, the male breadwinner model is no longer appropriate for resolving the current crisis in care, and the new alternative model should be aiming to foster gender equality by promoting women’s employment and this is dependent on widespread care provision. Due to these links, the political agenda of socialisation of care should promote the equal participation in the labour market between men and women as well as provide widespread care provision. This section is aimed at eliciting the gender elements that should be considered when providing care services so as to socialise them in the aforementioned manner. In particular, the focus on the literature that proposes new gender dimensions in public care provision, especially that pertaining to the side of the caregiver.

To this end, three key aspects are addressed: how to afford the provision (affordability), to what extent is there satisfaction with the service quality (adequacy), and how much autonomy does there need to be regarding the choosing and accessing of the services (autonomy). These three dimensions will be discussed in the context of gender relations, which are defined here as the different structural limitations men and women experience in employing care services in care markets. Women’s position in the labour market has been marginalised and their roles have been defined either as only caregivers or as having the dual roles of workers and housewives (J. Millar, 2006; P. Taylor-Gooby, 2004b). These dissimilar conditions have brought about different impacts on decision making between men and women, for example, whether to employ services or to do the care work by themselves, as well as whether women should take part time or full time work. These potentially negative impacts on women are considered here in the context of gender relations in care practice.

On the one hand, some argue that it should be recognized that the trend of care provision has recently become more privatised and marketised, as shown in many countries even in social democratic countries (Brennan et al., 2012). Further, Ungerson (2000) borrowed the concept of a 'mixed economy of welfare' for describing this tendency in care provision, with the core notion of an internal market based in a purchaser/provider split. It is true that the care services, especially for the elderly as well as children in the case of South Korea are now mostly provided by the private sector. For instance, ninety privately licensed care establishments exist for every one public one in childcare provision. Certainly, there has been regulation by government, but it has yet to be proven whether these new directions in care provision have alleviated the care burden on the family. If not, the fundamental reason for this needs to be investigated. There is an argument that the marketisation in care provision in this country has brought new forms of gendered inequality, which in turn will have an impact on gendered patterns (Choi, 2010). However, this author has also argued that care provision in South Korea has led to the exclusion of some groups, that is, their not be able to enter the private markets for care, because they are ineligible to receive support in the form of privatised social insurance (ibid).

Synthesizing all these recent developments in care markets, the concern here is whether affordability is equal for everyone regardless of their economic situations, and whether the services provided are adequate and suitable. Another issue is whether the available service choices are open to all those who wish avail themselves of them so as to meet their care needs. In order to operationalise the three focal dimensions of care provision, the gender relations will be explored for each, and the identified elements will be divided into two levels: macro and micro. Whereas the gender relations at the macro level are rooted in more structural situations by institutional designs, those at the micro level are based on the issues happening in care practice in terms of the conditions under which it is carried out and received (M Daly & Lewis, 1998; Mary Daly & Lewis, 2000). The reason for separating them into two levels is that this study the interest is in with analysing both policy and practical gender relations in actual care practice.

2.3.1 Affordability and economic independence

Affordability, refers to the purchaser being able to afford the source of care she envisages availing herself of from the care market. Regarding how this ties in with gender relations, Taylor-Gooby (2004) suggested that there should be an understanding of the situation in the labour markets, which has become increasingly polarized between men and women as well as even among male workers, especially since the onset of the post-industrial society in 1990s. This polarization is characterised by increased employment, especially at the top, but also at the bottom end of the distribution of skills and (or) wages, which means in parallel that the intermediate range has declined (P. Taylor-Gooby, 2004a). Certainly, it does not mean that the top is nearly all male workers with a regular and decent salary, whereas at the bottom is populated almost entirely by female workers with relatively lower salaries and irregular working contracts. However, there is much evidence that women's position in the labour market has become relatively casualized and unstable, compared to men's (H. Joshi, 1995b). It can therefore be concluded that many of those women without professional skills and higher education are vulnerable to the economic uncertainties of today's increasingly polarized world. Moreover, this polarization can be found even amongst female workers in terms of significantly different wages and working contracts in the labour market (H. Joshi, 1995a).

On the other hand, there is another gap in wage and working conditions between female workers with children and those without. Joshi et al. (1999) defined this split as the 'family gap', which pertains to differential pay between women with and those without children. By way of explanation, at a time of increasing labour market participation by mothers, a wage gap exists between them and other women which negatively impacts on them affording the costs of childbearing (H Joshi, Paci, & Waldfogel, 1999). These authors found that among full-time employees, women who broke their employment for childbirth were subsequently paid less than childless women. In contrast, mothers who maintained employment continuity were as well paid as childless women, but they were mostly not remunerated as much as men. Similarly, Budig and England (2001) argued that motherhood is related to a lower hourly wage owing to having children, which causes them to lose job experience and continuity of career, as well as their making less productive progress at work.

Moreover, pregnancy and child care responsibilities tend to make employers reluctant to hire them (ibid).

Clearly, these circumstances can be obstacles for women entering the labour market, which may lead them to stay at home, caring for their own children or dependents in their families, rather than working outside. If so, the driving forces for making such a decision need to be investigated and in this thesis this is considered in terms of the 'opportunity cost between work and care'. Opportunity cost refers to all the costs of any activity measured in terms of the value of the next best alternative (that is not chosen). After assessing all such costs and the obstacles for women in the labour market, the issue then is out of staying at home or going out to work, which is the more economic and/or achievable, if everything else is constant? This probably depends on how much they have to pay for the care services in the market and how much women can earn in paid markets instead of undertaking any care work themselves. Indeed, Connelly (1992) verified that effect of child care costs on married women with children, was that as these increased in the care markets their rate labour force participation decreased. This provides clear evidence that such women are more likely to have difficulties in affording care than their counterparts, unless there is a way to resolve this financial burden. From a slightly different perspective, Hofferth and Wissoker (1992) tried to find the relationship between service quality and price and whether the latter is a critical variable for parents with their child care choices. They elicited that parents do not consistently select high quality care at a higher price and subsidizing childcare costs directly through vouchers and reduced fees or increasing other family income through tax credits consistently increases the use of centre- based programmes, everything else being equal (Hofferth & Wissoker, 1992). Thus, this financial issue can be a determinative factor which makes the users able to employ the service, especially for lone mothers, who have difficulty entering labour markets due to care needs.

Another issue relating to the exclusion of women from the labour market comes under those conditions where paid work for them is not easily available as the norm is that it is their role to be that of informal caregiver without access to the social security system. In fact, Kremer (2006) described this problem in Austria's case,

which has been classified as a strong breadwinner state. Here, most informal carers have no or only limited access to the social security system, and instead depend, for the most part, on a (male) breadwinner. Likewise, Ungerson (2000) claimed that such women have a restricted network for finding care sources in their old age. In other words, she contended that the knock-on effects into old age between men and women are clearly different. That is, in these societies low wages and irregular employment females, leads to them being excluded from the rights of social security such as a national public pension and health insurance in their old age (Chizuko & Katharine, 2006; J. Millar, 2006; Ungerson, 2000). In sum, given that the affordability of such social security is based on the accumulation of how much people have contributed during their employment, the situation of women in the labour market is often substantially different from that of men, especially in male breadwinner nations.

Consequently, the circumstances regarding the issue of women and caring work can be described as a vicious circle involving low wages in labour markets and exclusion from social networks and no, or limited access to care in old age. From the existing literature, on the one hand, it would appear that when investigating the provision care services at any stage in life, the institutional setting for supporting economic resources needs to be probed at the macro level should be intensively discussed. On the other hand, at the micro-level, the issue of financial access is the key factor as this drives such matters as the decision whether to employ care or not, who takes up the financial burden and whether the available coverage is meeting demand.

2.3.2 Adequacy and attitude to service quality

This dimension refers to the consumer level of satisfaction with the service quality when they purchase it, for example, whether the service provision is suitable for the needs of the care-receivers as well as caregivers. As noted earlier, the care market has become increasingly marketised and privatised with relatively liberalised service regulation and management of service quality. Williams (2010) has claimed that when the care is commodified in a relatively uncontrolled private market, this influences not only the quality of care services, but also the conditions of those who provide them (F. Williams, 2010). There is today considerable agreement among developmental researchers on the aspect of care quality being directly positively

linked to the outcomes for the elderly or children. The concern here is that if there is marked stratification of the quality and the service cost for consumers and if satisfaction levels at the lower end become poor, then care responsibility will revert to being the duty of family members. The other reason for emphasizing this dimension is that the satisfaction with the service does not always depend on affordability. For instance, everyone may be able to afford some sort of care through government subsidy or their employers, but its quality means that some needs are adequately met whilst others are not. So here the issue is matching service need with the quality of the available provision.

Relating to the assessment service quality, the problem is that the satisfaction levels have been mainly measured with quantitative indicators, such as: child/staff ratio, group size and the education–training of the caregivers. That is, this ratio is one of the measurable characteristics of childcare that is thought to influence the provider behaviour and which, in turn, may affect that of children (Hofferth and Wissoker, 1992; Phillips, 1987; Ruopp et al., 1979). However, these indicators can show only the outcomes in providing care, which although being of importance, are unable to assess standards from the point of view of caregivers, especially with regards to gender relations. That is, quality is an important aspect of gender relations, because if it is inadequate, it is women who will have to shoulder the responsibility if the decision is to bring care back into the home.

Helburn and Howes (1996) asserted that the quality of child care varies widely and children's futures differ depending upon their experience. More specifically, they argued that quality of child care can be defined by two highly interrelated components: structural quality, which captures the aspects of the care environment that are often regulated by government, and process quality, which captures the experiences children have in care. Furthermore, they added that the adult work environment indirectly influences the children in care, because it is closely tied to both caregiver behaviour and longevity. These authors' ideas are drawn upon to assess the adequacy dimension: service quality at the macro level and care satisfaction at the micro. Firstly, ensuring service quality pertains to the regulation of the care market by governments, whereby it is posited that governments should

regulate training for formal carers in care markets and manage the programmes. That is, as markets have become increasingly privatised, it is argued that the public provision should run in parallel and service monitoring should be involved with the government, for example, setting who and how to assess, what is assessed and recommendations for enforcement. On the other hand, at the micro level it is also important to measure the general level of consumer satisfaction in care practice.

2.3.3 Autonomy and availability

The final issue that needs to be considered regarding the provision of care is autonomy. According to the principal concept of autonomy, it means that carers and those receiving care should not be forced to use specific types of care services, but should be able to design the care arrangements of their choice (Morris, 2006). Indeed, this concept has been considered as an integral part of current political debates. For example, the left in Britain argues that promotion of choice undermines the relationship between citizens and the state. However, the New Labour government saw choice in public services as an essential part of the consumerist relationship between the government and the citizen (Morris, 2006). By contrast, in France freedom to choose covers whether families care for their children themselves or not, as well as the availability of different types of care options. Indeed, both of these two types of policies have been pursued in this country as part of the wider employment strategy. To these ends, new benefits have been given to promote employment by subsidizing parents who hire childcare workers in the home and parental leave benefits have been expanded to encourage certain parents to leave the labour market to care for their own children (Fagnani, 1998; Martin et al., 1998; Morgan, 2006). However, this strategy has been subject to the criticism that these choices for parents, especially for lower waged female workers, have resulted in them staying at home caring, rather than participating in work, by ensuring that government subsidies for the employed are sufficient.

In this study, it is assumed that all caregivers should have an equal right for participating in the labour market and that they should be able to employ care services whenever they need them, without any institutional restraints. Under these perspectives, autonomy therefore refers to using the services in care markets without

constraints imposed by the provision of the system. Two issues regarding autonomy for using services in care markets are focused upon: choice and access. Regarding choice, the need for the services varies according to who they are for and when they need them. In relation to women's occupations, these are concentrated in a few categories that are particularly poorly paid, such as cleaners, shop assistants and waitresses, whereas men are much more likely to be in occupations connected with manufacturing or higher level services, such as banking or insurance (H. Joshi, 1995b). The concern here is that women need more flexible care services at night or even weekends during their working hours owing to the characteristics of their jobs, with them often having unsociable hours. Therefore, it should be emphasized who the mothers are, what kind of services they need, and whether the institutional setting for providing services relates to these needs. The other issue considered here relating to autonomy is that of access in terms of location and information. As care provision is becoming increasingly privatised, the providers in care markets may be keen on being located in main cities with a higher demand for their services, in spite of the existence of government regulation. This could cause polarisation of high standard care services to urban areas. Moreover, access to honest information about the available services should be equally provided to consumers, especially for caregivers with lower levels of education.

Notwithstanding the above, it should be remembered that there are still gender issues around the area of informal care, due to its continuing persistence in care practice. Two types of this kind of care prevail, firstly, that which depends only on an informal carer without employment of formal care services and these are usually women who do not work in the labour market. The other dominant mode is the employment of informal carers in place of formal care services, such as relatives, friends or neighbours.

Having explained the three dimensions that are focused upon in the exploration of gender relations regarding the provision of formal care services in this thesis, Table 2-2 specifies the gender elements that are probed for each dimension. These elements indicate how the institutional settings at the macro level relate to the caring conditions at the micro level. The institutional settings refer to the nature of state-

based provision, while care practice concerns the conditions under which the care is carried out and received. That is, the existence of an intersection between these demonstrates the importance of considering the macro elements as they influence care practice on the ground, and in turn, this practice, coupled with that of reported consumer satisfaction with it, can have an impact on the government. By introducing the gender politics dimension into this frame, the research questions for this thesis, in particular regarding the socialisation of care, are addressed in the context of both policy and actual care delivery. Thus, these key elements in Table 2-2 aim to provide further indicators in order to see whether any changes in the institutional settings and in the conditions for care practice, have occurred, as well as to explore any gaps between these two levels, which the reform initiatives have not reached to the extent of bringing about changes in care conditions in spite of introducing changes in the institutional settings.

Table 2-2 Key Elements in Formal Care Provision for Socialisation of Care

	Macro-level ¹	Micro-level ²
Affordability	<i>Economic resources</i>	<i>Financial access</i>
	Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expenditure • financial breakdown • subsidies Provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ownership (public/private split) • service requirements Opportunity cost <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • women's labour market situation • employer's contribution • government benefits (e.g., pension credit or tax relief) 	Care decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factors influencing decisions Actual financial burden <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the financial burden • how much is the actual payment • the carer's employment Actual demand and coverage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by women's employment status and children's age • between urban and rural areas • special needs
Adequacy	<i>Service quality</i>	<i>Care attitude</i>
	Service regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training formal carers 	General satisfaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programme management Service assessment and monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who and how to assess • what is assessed • recommendation enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transportation • delivery • informal care support
Autonomy	<i>Service availability</i>	<i>Reliance on informal care</i>
	Choice (service diversity) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public and private • opening time • places (day-care vs. home based) Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information and referral system • how to get there 	Care decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factors influencing decisions Actual gender division of caring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who informally cares • for how long and for whom

Note:

1. Macro-level: state based provision structure
2. Micro-level: actual care practice in the conditions under which care is carried out and received

Having posed the research questions given for this thesis (see the section 1.1 in Chapter 1), Table 2-1 sets the first analytical framework for investigating the extent to which gender politics has influenced the socialisation of care for children, in this case in South Korea. Table 2-2 presents the second analytical framework for exploring the effect that gender politics may have had on the current modes of provision regarding public childcare services.

2.4 Summary

To sum up, this theoretical chapter is positioned regarding the nexus of two theoretical conceptualisations, which are: the socialisation of care and gender politics. The socialisation of care is defined in this research as a discourse change around the issue of caring work, which introduces the idea of it being a public responsibility rather than solely being a private matter. These competing discourses around the socialisation of care are geared towards bringing political intervention that optimises

the sharing of responsibility for caring work between the state, market and the family as well as between men and women within the latter. Having defined this, the notion of gender politics is conceptualised in this study as a political endeavour pertaining to bringing a gender dimension into the policy making process. With these two theoretical concepts established, the chapter has provided two analytical frameworks displayed in Tables 2-1 and 2-2 respectively, which are applied in the empirical Chapters 5, 6 and 7 in this thesis.

Chapter 3: The Historical Context of Childcare Provision in South Korea

This chapter aims to provide key background information regarding childcare provision in South Korea before the process of reforming childcare policy was undertaken by the Roh government. In order to illuminate how the issue of childcare attracted political concerns during under this government, this chapter sets out the historical narrative and context of childcare provision that existed before the Roh government came to power. That is, this chapter addresses the pre-existing structure of care provision and the relevant socioeconomic factors which brought about political concern regarding childcare policy during the Roh government's period in office. This historical context of childcare provision helps to identify the problem, i.e. the changes in patterns of family formation and the changes in patterns of paid employment for working mothers and gender issues that featured during the Roh reforming process which are subsequently comprehensively probed in Chapter 6 as well as the policy initiatives for the socialisation of care which are fully explored in Chapter 7.

There are three sections to this chapter and in the first, some key studies are reviewed concerning the Korean welfare regime set among East Asian countries and the traditional roles of women in welfare provision. Having discussed the characteristics of the Korean welfare regime, in the second part, the focus moves to the transition phase experienced in Korean society, which having undergone socioeconomic changes after the late 1990s, saw an expansion of social expenditure in response to meet these and their associated demands. By exploring this visible transition period, this part of the chapter seeks to show how Korean welfare provision has shifted. In addition, this section reveals 'the lack of care' which largely emerged from the socioeconomic changes that had been occurring since the late 1990s. This discussion points to the fact that new forms of formal care provision were needed rather than the state continuing to rely on women handling care issues within the family. Moreover, the second section serves to indicate that the issue of care started to be associated with concerns about gender equality in the political arena, as instigated by the gender mainstreaming movement that gained pace over the two presidencies, those of Kim Dae-jung (in power from February 1998 to February 2003) and Roh Moo-hyun (in

power from February 2003 to February 2008). Having acknowledged this emergent political interest in care, in the third and final section there is a review of the structure of formal childcare provision as it existed at the time when President Roh was on the threshold of launching the reforms. Therefore, there is a detailed account of the structure of childcare provision in the care market which had mainly been built under the auspices of the earlier Kim Young-sam government that was in office from February 1993 until February 1998.

3.1 South Korea and the East Asian Welfare Regime: 'Caring' and 'Women'

It has been acknowledged that welfare provisions in South Korea are based on a 'Confucian welfare regime' as found in other East Asian countries e.g. Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore (Goodman & Peng, 1996) with Confucian ideas forming the main cultural heritage that emphasizes diligence and hard work. It is these moral virtues and beliefs that could have been one of the causes of the rapid economic growth experienced in East Asian countries since the late 1980s (Ham, 1997; K. Kim, 1993). However, this Confucian philosophy conflicts with notions of equality with regard to gender roles in the family as well as in the workplace, and this is salient in terms of the development of the welfare state (Peng, 2009; Sung, 2003; Won & Pascall, 2004). In East Asian countries, traditional Confucian ideas are likely to lead to women having an unconditional obligation to take on the roles of housewives and/or caregivers in the family rather than to become active workers in the labour market. Palley and Gelb (1994) proposed that the woman's position in traditional Confucian societies is founded on her obedience to the following three figures: her father, husband and son. This is consistent with Sung's (2003) study of women reconciling paid and unpaid work in South Korea that found that women often have to belong to their in-laws after marriage, so that, in addition, the role of caring for parents-in-law is usually assigned to them.

Esping-Andersen (1999) classified the Korean welfare regime as 'familialistic' along with the regimes of Japan and the Southern Mediterranean countries of Italy and Spain. He argued that in these states when considering the distribution of

responsibility for welfare provision between the state, market and family, the lattermost has a relatively key role. Further, in such countries, the family household is likely to assume an extremely heavy burden of responsibility for providing welfare benefits for the family members (G Esping-Andersen, 1999; Peng, 2009). However, it should be noted here that the households eligible for claiming state welfare benefits are mainly those headed up by male full-time workers in the labour market. Under Korea's dualistic employment system, men tend to provide material support for the family by undertaking paid work in the labour market, while women provide caring work in the family without any material compensation. Owing to this arrangement, men in South Korea are able to escape actual care giving by facilitating it through providing material support and by delegating such practical tasks to women (Peng, 2009). Hence, in terming the traditional Korean welfare regime as familialistic, rather than simply regarding the family as the main source of welfare provision, the gendered roles apparent between men and women in a family need to be distinguished. In particular, the issue of who cares, that is, why women undertake caring and men paid work, and the factors determining this split, need to be addressed.

Lewis (1992) identified the Korean welfare regime as depending on the 'strong male bread winner' along with the regimes of Germany, Ireland and Japan. This scholar posited that private (domestic) work is a crucial dimension to a gendered understanding of welfare provision, because historically, women have been regarded as having dependant status within the family as wives and mothers. Accordingly, the relationship between unpaid work and paid work is decidedly important in considering the nature of the welfare regime (J. Lewis, 1992). Moreover, it can be argued that the Korean welfare regime has tended to devolve individual welfare and care responsibilities to households thus impacting particularly negatively on women since almost no alternatives to the family for care delivery have been provided. This view is supported by Ahn's (2008) survey of time spent on paid and unpaid care work which revealed that married women's mean participation (measured in time spent) in housekeeping was significantly longer compared to that of married men and single women. Moreover, much of married women's unpaid care work appeared to be concentrated on childcare (An, 2008) and the absence of both public and private

market sources of care has rendered the family the only viable site for personal care. Consequently, it can be contended that women have performed much of the care work within the family in an uncommodified form, which means that a woman remains dependant on the male breadwinner in the household when it comes to her rights to receive welfare benefits from the state.

Although Korean welfare provision has maintained its key features, namely, its Confucian and familial orientations as well as the male bread winner platform, it should be noted that significant remodelling has been occurring since the late 1990s (Y. M. Kim, 2008; H.-j. Kwon, 2002; Peng, 2009, 2011). With regards to caring and women, the state's preference for assigning welfare obligations to individual households has been modified by attempts to lessen women's care responsibilities through the expansion of social care services (Pascall & Sung, 2014; Sung, 2003; Won & Pascall, 2004). In particular, the process of shifting some care burdens, such as child and elderly care, out of the family, has resulted in the commodification of some of women's hitherto un-commodified care work in the home (Kang, Kim, Park, Choi, & Kim, 2007; Shin & Shaw, 2003). The following section probes this transition phase involving the expansion of state welfare expenditure on social security systems, such as pensions and employment, as well as growing political concerns about childcare beginning to feature in the political arena alongside the issue of gender equality.

3.2 The transition of Korean society and growing political interest regarding care

Korean society has undergone significant changes regarding types of family forms, its demographic profile which was affected particularly by ageing and low fertility, as well as having a polarised labour market in terms of gender-biased work status and occupations. Moreover, Korea was faced with the economic crisis related to the impact of the conditions set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1997 and 1998. These socioeconomic circumstances appear to have facilitated welfare expansion through active state intervention (Y. M. Kim, 2008; H.-j. Kwon, 2002)

and as a consequence, this era has been identified as being a transition period in the development of welfare in South Korea (ibid).

It is important to understand these socioeconomic changes and explore how the government responded to novel emergent social needs and demands. Among these demands was the political interest in the extant inadequate provision of care, which was widely described as ‘the lack of care’ by the general public at the time. Next, the context and backdrop for the issue of childcare moving into politics and subsequent reforms are presented.

3.2.1 The transition phase

Regarding caring and women, the socioeconomic changes were apparent across three aspects: changes in the family form, composition of the country’s demographic profile and the nature of the labour market. These dimensions could be observed clearly during the transition period which lasted from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. This sub-section therefore gives an account of each of these before a brief description of how welfare provision was duly expanded is presented in the following sub-section. In the last two sub-sections, these developments are related to how political concern about care matters arose in the political arena. The data deployed here is drawn from the late 1990s and late 2000s in order to show the on-going changes.

3.2.1.1 Changes in the family form

During last few decades, from the 1990s to the present, Korean households have been becoming smaller with fewer family members. As illustrated in Figure 3-1, the number of family members has become remarkably reduced so that the proportion of households with more than four family members has dramatically decreased. In 1990, 58% of total households contained more than four people, but by 2010 this was only 31%. On the contrary, during the same period, single person ones significantly increased from 9% to 24% and those with two members also rose from 14% to 24%. This reveals that not only had the family size but also its composition, in terms of how many generations it comprised, might have been decreasing. Further, as described in Figure 3-2, the proportion of two generation households has decreased

considerably during the time period from 66% to 51% and similarly, three generation households have decreased slightly, from 11% to 6%. However, the proportion of one generation households has increased from 11% to 17% for this period. Notably, the proportion of households containing individuals identified as ‘others’ had more than doubled by 2010, from 11% to 25%. This suggests that the composition of the family unit has become more diverse and includes members who might not be related through marriage or blood ties (S.-j. Woo, Min, & Kim, 2010).

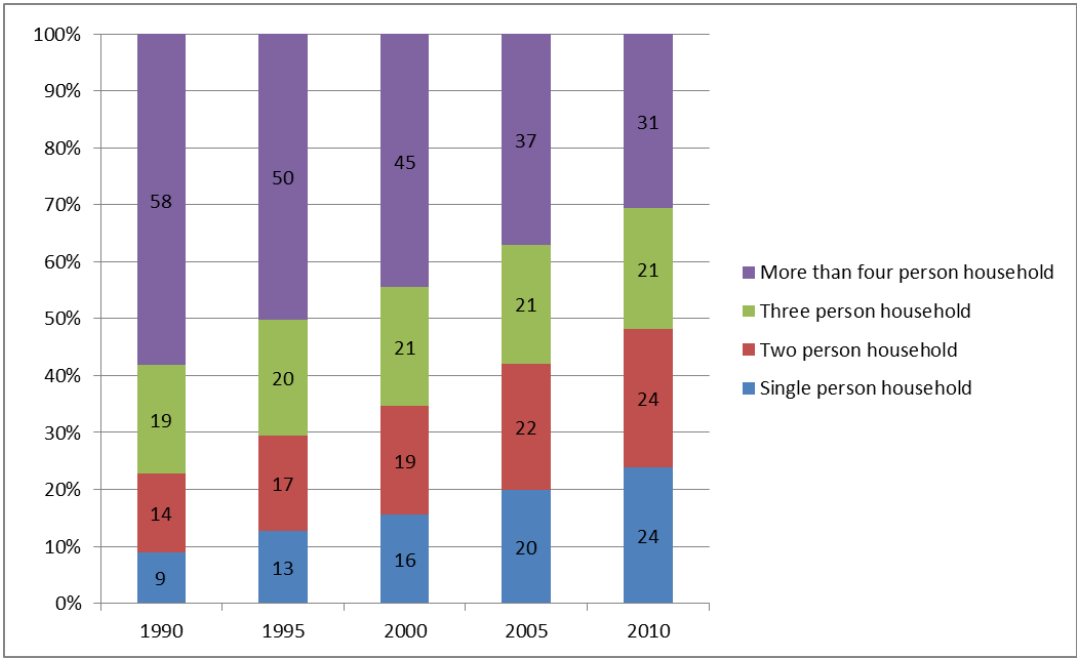


Figure 3-1 The number of family members, for the years 1990 to 2010

Note: This survey is conducted every five years.

Source: National Statistical Office, Population and Housing Census, each year

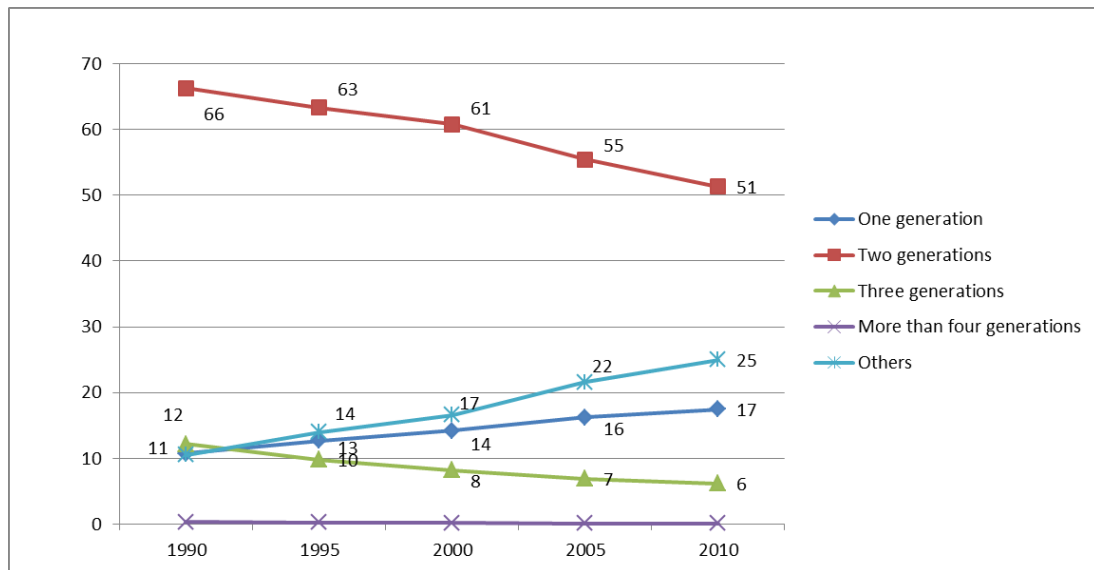


Figure 3-2 The composition of the family by generations, for the years 1990 to 2010

Source: National Statistical Office, Population and Housing Census, each year

With this increased proportion of one generation households, Figure 3-3 provides information on the changes over time regarding the gender of the head of the household. Since 1990, the proportion of female-headed households has become greater, reaching almost 30% of the total in 2010 whereas male-headed households gradually decreased slightly over time. This casts considerable doubt on whether the traditional assumption of the male as bread winner and as welfare provider within the family unit, still holds true for a growing proportion of Korean households (Ma, 2005).

Figure 3-4 shows the marital status of females leading households over time. Whereas the data for married heads of households indicates that this proportion has been stable at 50% over the period of 1990 to 2010, the proportions for divorced and non-married female household heads have become incrementally larger. In particular, the figure for divorced ones has nearly tripled and was recorded at 8% in 2010. Figure 3-5 addresses data on the ages of divorced female household heads, who, in general appear to have become older over the time period. The highest proportion of them was in their late forties in 2010, whereas the peak in 1990 was for those aged in their late thirties. Moreover, for women in their sixties, the proportion has reached over 10% in spite of the fact that in 1990 hardly any individuals were recorded as

fitting this category. Regarding non-married female heads of household, the proportion of them in the overall total of female household heads increased slightly but their age has become older. For instance, as shown in Figure 3.6, non-married female household heads aged over their forties was almost 17% in 2010 but only 3% in 1990.

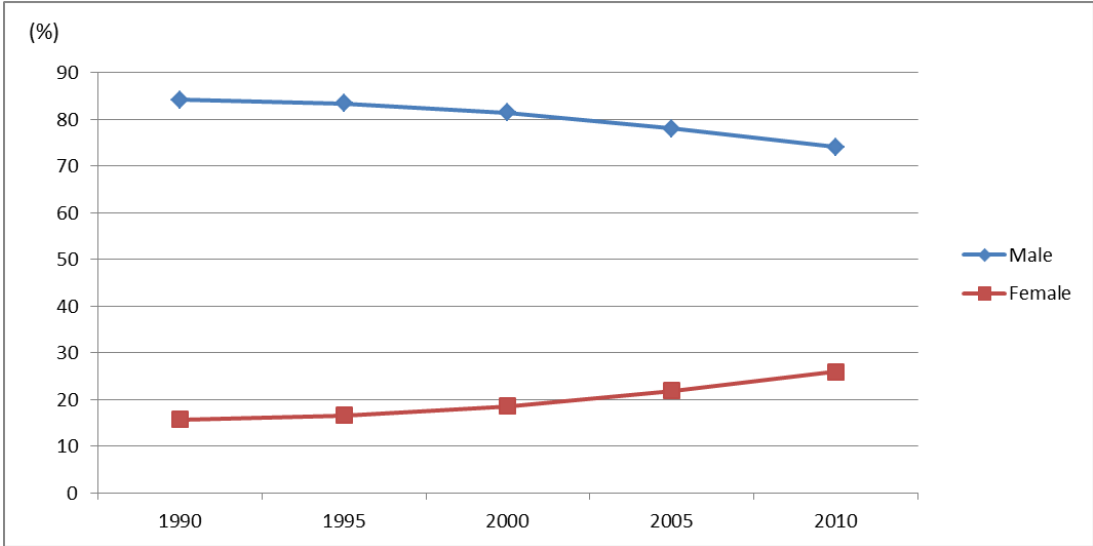


Figure 3-3 The increasing proportion of female head of households, for the years 1990 to 2010

Source: National Statistical Office, Population and Housing Census, each year

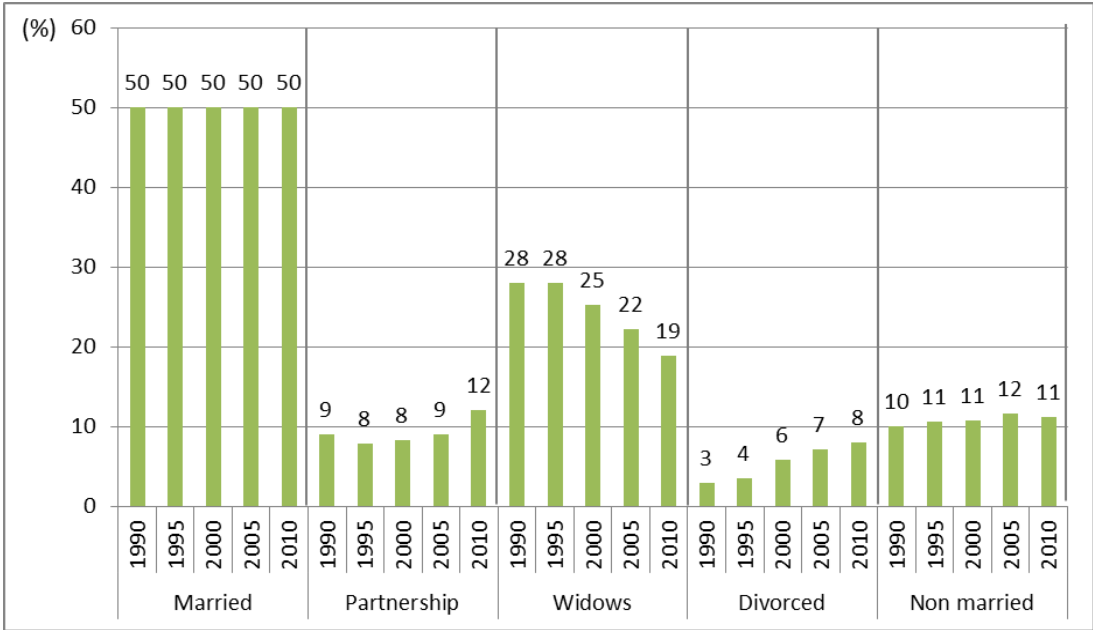


Figure 3-4 Marital status of female heads of households for the years 1990 to 2010

Source: National Statistical Office, Population and Housing Census, each year

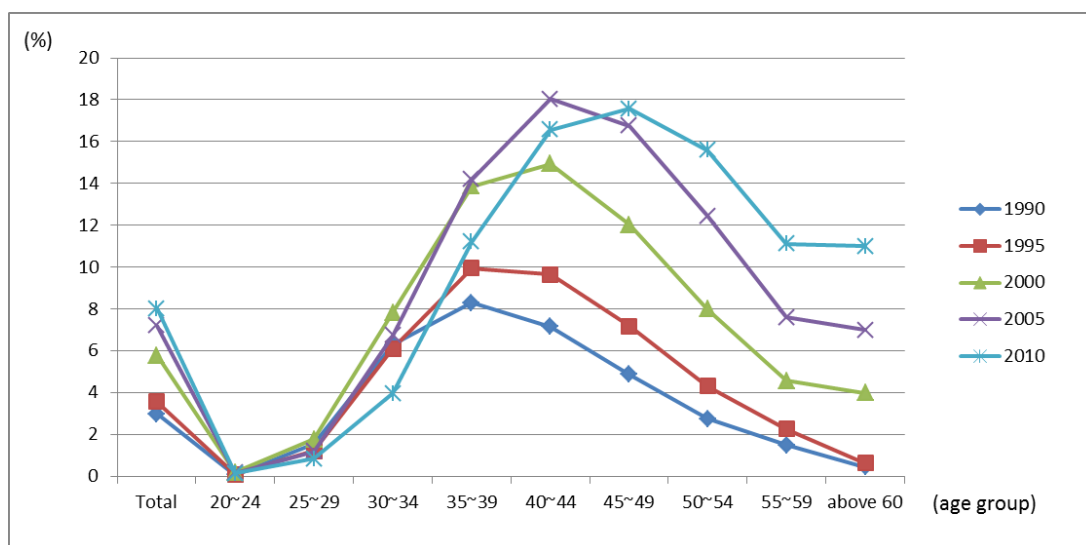


Figure 3-5 The proportion of divorced female heads of households, by age group, for the years 1990 to 2010

Source: National Statistical Office, Population and Housing Census, each year

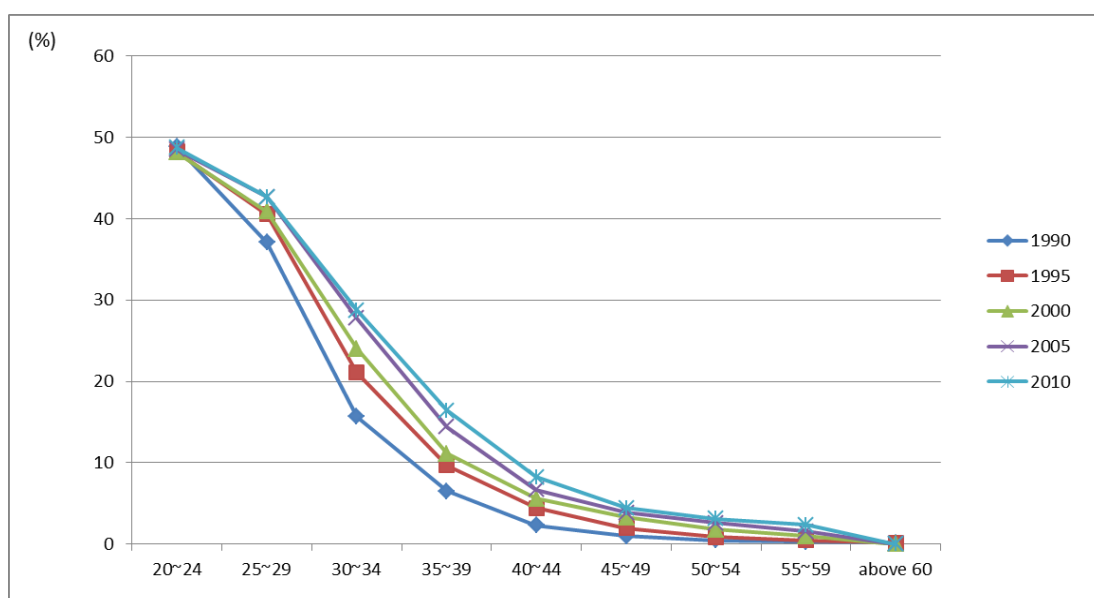


Figure 3-6 The proportion of non-married female heads of households, by age group, for the years 1990 to 2010

Source: National Statistical Office, Population and Housing Census, each year

To sum up, the changes illustrated above regarding family composition, structure as well as the reduction in size, demanded that the state undertake interventions in order to shore up the weakened role of the family as the principal carer and welfare provider in times of need. Alongside this, the data underlines the contention that given the increased proportion of households headed up by women, the assumption that the male in the family served as bread winner and was welfare provider, was no longer tenable.

3.2.1.2 Changes in the demographic profile of South Korea

In tandem with changes regarding family type and its function, Korean society has faced shifts in terms of demography, these being the rapid on-set of an ageing population and a low fertility rate. Both these are key factors when projecting the dependency ratio and index of ageing for the country in to the future³. As illustrated in Figure 3-7, the dependency ratio has been increasing over time and reached more than 15.6% in 2011 showing that it had more than doubled since the 1980s when it was only 6.1%. Regarding the index of ageing, in 2040 it will have more than quadrupled compared to the figure for 2011, increasing from 73 to 289 in approximately 30 years. On the contrary, the fertility rate⁴ as shown in Figure 3-8, dramatically decreased from 1991 when it was 1.74 to 2005 when the rate was just 1.08. In fact, this rate for South Korea was the lowest recorded for all the OECD countries for 2005 (Adema & Whiteford, 2007a) and at the time came as a considerable shock to the governmental authorities. Apart from this low fertility rate, it is also noted that changes have occurred regarding the ages of women giving birth. That is, the groups of women aged from 20 to 24 and from 25 to 29 years old have been less fertile but those aged from 30 to 34 and from 35 to 39 years old have been more fertile. This trend regarding fertility suggests that the age for women getting married and having a baby is older than previously and it could be linked with the increased rate of women participating in the labour market, as has been observed in

³ The dependency ratio is calculated by the composition of the population aged 65 years and over, to the population aged 15 to 64 years old, whilst the index of ageing is the ratio of the population aged over 65 to the population aged less than 15 years old.

⁴ The total births per woman aged between 15 and 49 years old.

other OECD countries (D'Addio & d'Ercole, 2005). This point is elaborated further in the following sub-section.

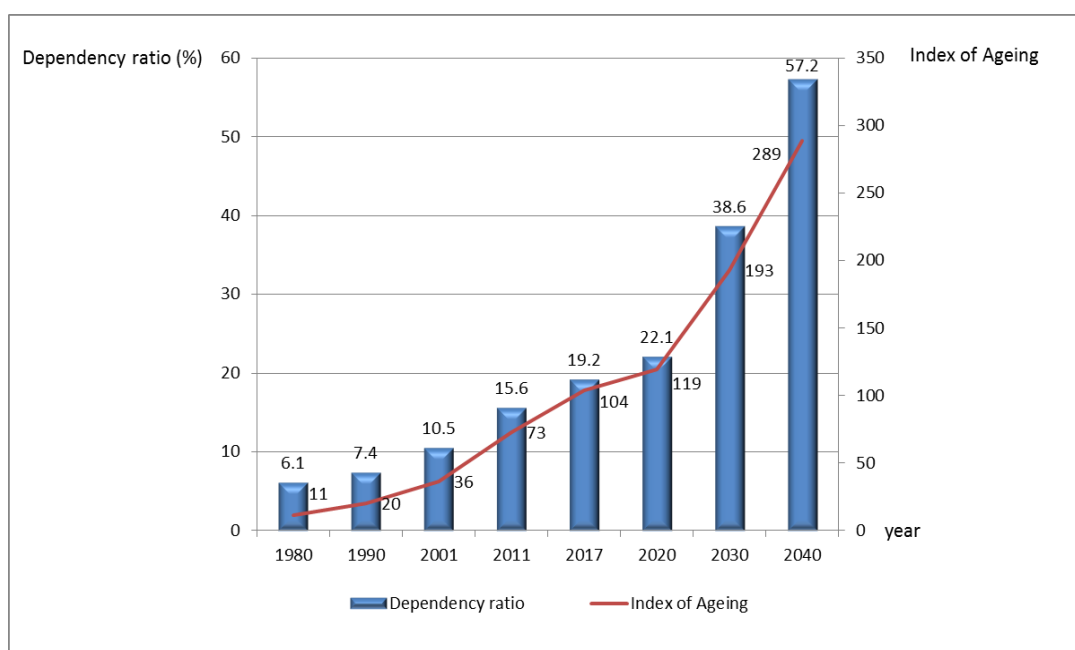


Figure 3-7 Dependency ratio and index of ageing

Source: National Statistical Office, The Future Estimated Population, 2012

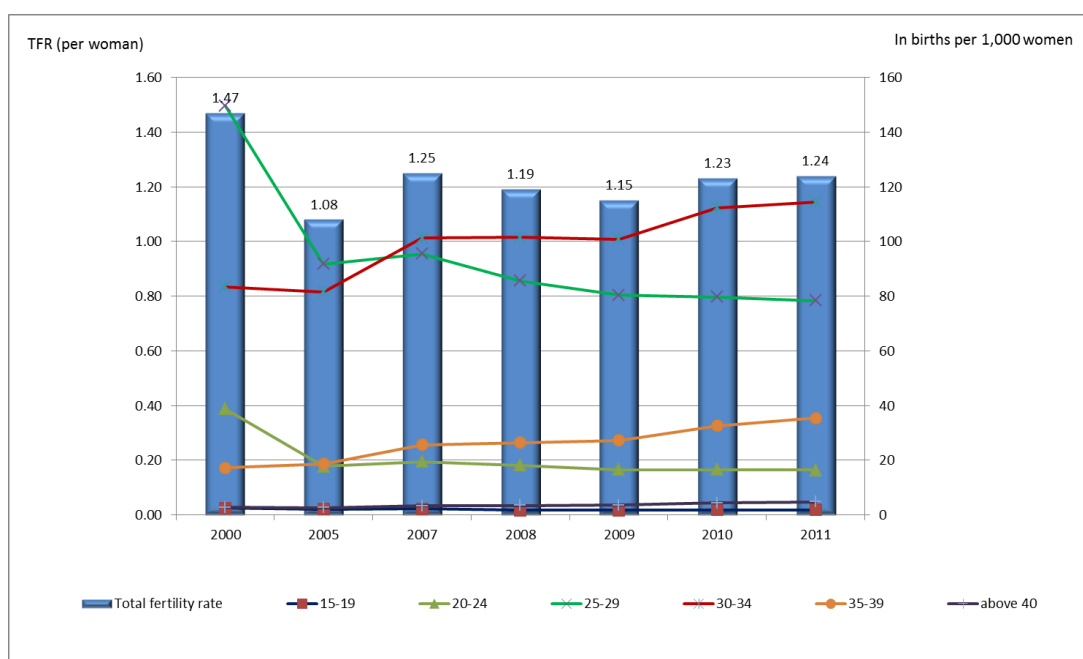


Figure 3-8 Total fertility rate and age-specific rate

Note: Total fertility rate means births per woman, aged from 15 to 49 years

Source: National Statistical Office, 2011 Annual Report on the Vital Statistics, 2012

3.2.1.3 Changes in the labour market

The rapid economic growth during the early industrialisation of South Korea in the late 1960s saw women's participation in the labour market noticeably increase as the Park Jung-hee government (in power from 1961 until his assassination in 1979) included women when mobilizing the national labour force. With this economic development, women's participation rate gradually increased from 37% in 1963 to 50% in 2002, according to data reported each year in the publication 'Economically Active Population Chronology' produced by the organisation Statistics Korea. However, in spite of this increase regarding women's participation it remained lower than that for men, that is, the men's rate was recorded at about 75% in 2002, whereas that for women only reached 50% in the same year. In addition, it emerges that participation rate according to age groups differed between men and women. That is, the rate for women in their late twenties and early thirties has been lower than the rates observed for other age groups. In contrast, the men's rate in these age groups tends to be higher than that for other age groups.

As revealed in Figure 3-9, between 1999 and 2002, the women's participation rate has maintained an 'M' shaped curve, whilst that for men was a reverse 'U' shape. This tendency regarding women's participation by age group can be distinguished from the pattern seen in other OECD countries (J.-s. Joo, 2009; S.-j. Woo et al., 2010), which does not show any interruption to continuous working participation in the labour market regarding age groups. Taking into consideration the curve, it may be assumed that females aged between their late twenties and early thirties may experience an interruption in their career path which obstructs continuous participation whereas men are unaffected by this. Indeed, the various national surveys carried out on working mothers who employ formal childcare services have reported that the main reason for this career break for women was the burden of childcare and responsibility for being a mother. Many faced the difficult decision of whether to work or not (Seo et al., 2009; Seo, Lim, & Park, 2002). Moreover, Lee (2001) pointed to the possibility of there being a strong stereotype that many women are expected to fulfil by stopping work or taking leave when they get married or have children (K. W. Lee, Cho, & Lee, 2001). In fact, these invisible barriers in

reconciling the balance between undertaking caring and working in the labour market have been significantly discussed in proposing relevant policies for better conditions of work life balance. Well provided and firmly established childcare provision has been referred to as one of the key policy areas that could advance conditions for work life balance (Adema & Whiteford, 2007b). Considering the burden of childcare and women's working participation in the Korean context, it could be concluded that the burden of childcare forms a structural barrier which obstructs women from achieving a work life balance in certain age groups and from fully participating in the labour market. It also shows that the issue of childcare provision needs to be considered thoroughly in order to create better circumstances for a feasible work life balance for women.

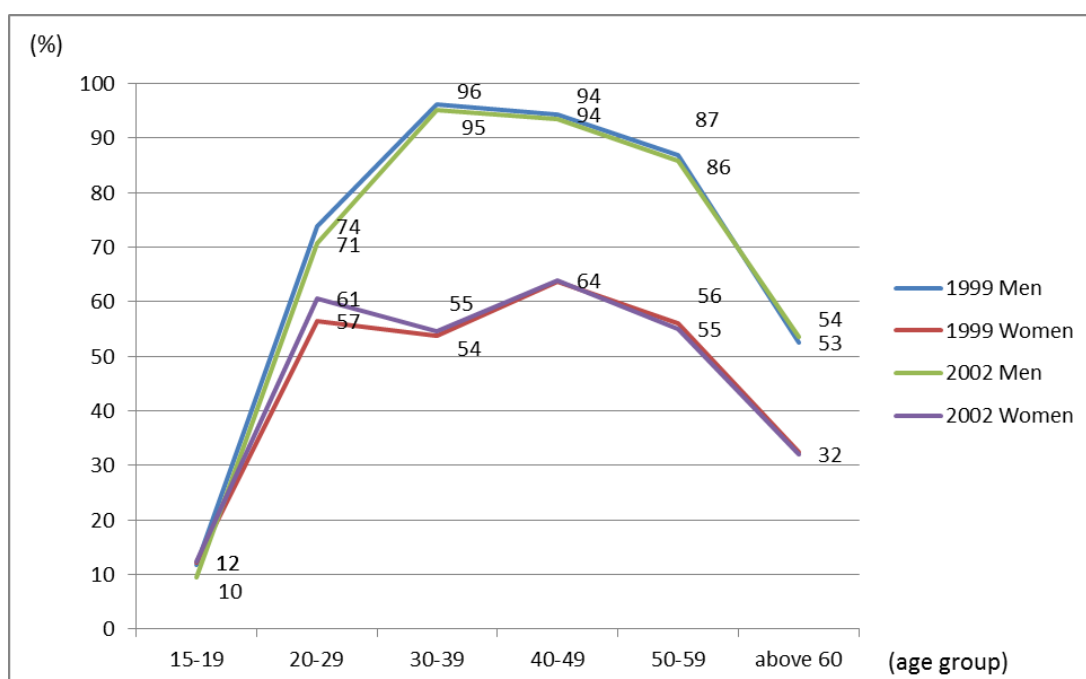


Figure 3-9 Labour force participation rate by age and gender in 1999 and 2002

Source: Statistics Korea, Economically Active Population Chronology, each year of 1999 and 2002.

Regarding working conditions in the labour market, in general, the Korean labour market has become polarized since the 1990s. In particular, the income gap between rich and poor people has become larger and the number of part-time workers has increased dramatically (S. Joo, Lee, & Jo, 2006). In detail, Figure 3-10 displays work

patterns undertaken by men and women over the ten years from 2003 to 2013. Overall, the gap between men and women regarding the number of regular workers has remained constant, and the proportion of males who work on a regular basis has remained relatively larger than that for women. In contrast, the proportion of female hourly workers has become larger than that for males and by 2013, the proportion of female hourly workers was 17%, whereas for men this form of work applied to only 5%. In this, it is evident that there is a polarised structure between men and women terms of them maintaining regular employment that entitles them to full state welfare coverage through their and their employers' contributions or instead their having only irregular and/or partial participation in the labour market that leaves them vulnerable in terms of welfare coverage.

There could be diverse reasons for these differences in the working status between men and women. For example there might be the preference in favour of male employees in the regular employment market or the industrial structure of regular employment might be relatively beneficial to men rather than for women. However, a more significant reason for this prevalence of women observed to have irregular participation in the labour market appears to be related to the burden of caring work, especially in the case of women who have young children (Chang, 1997). According to some scholars, these women are likely to prefer hourly work and flexible working times, rather than take regular shifts as full time workers (Choi, 2008). Although this explanation originated from an investigation of women's choices this preference for being irregular workers needs to be carefully dealt with when proposing relevant policy. The preference for hourly-based work may be enforced on women by themselves as a response to the family situations in which they find themselves. That is, women may be faced with the problem of reconciling responsibilities they feel as a good mother, social expectations placed on them by friends and family members, as well as some cultural and/or Confucian-orientated assumptions regarding a woman's place being in the home. When it comes to policy, simply increasing the numbers of working positions that are not regular (i.e. in terms of hours, contracts and social security contributions) cannot be the solution to resolving the burden of caring work. It is reasonable to suggest that the fundamental argument should be about how to make the balance for women between doing caring work at home and

participating in the labour market without any such barriers intervening. The direction of labour market policy needs to be considered together with affordable, adequate and autonomous forms of childcare provision.

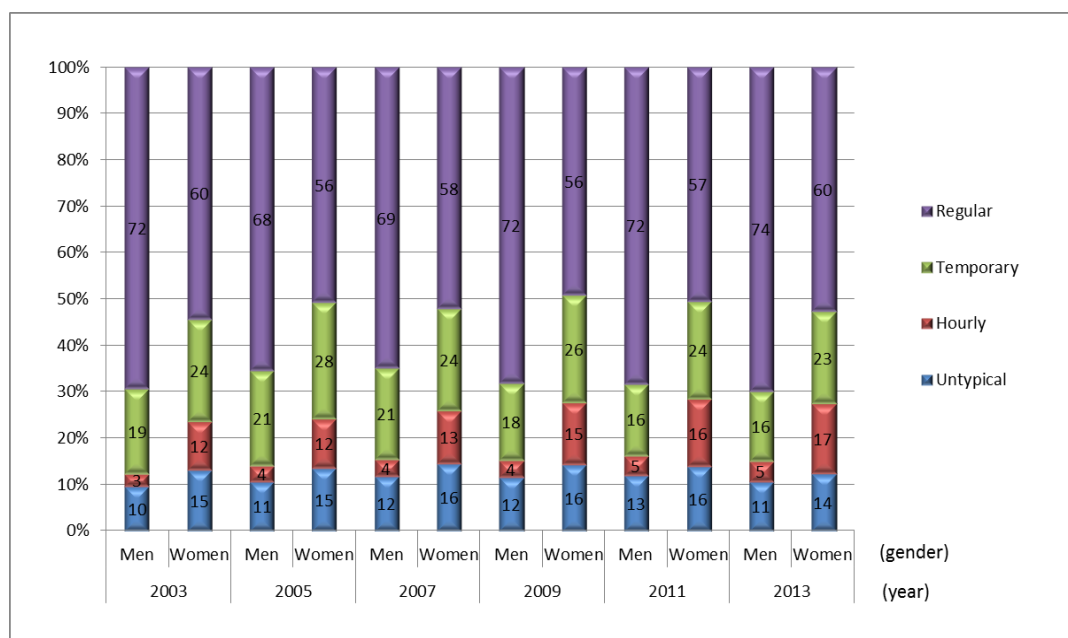


Figure 3-10 Nature of work undertaken in the labour market by gender for the years 2003 to 2013

Source: Statistics Korea, Economically Active Population Chronology, each year

Having undergone the partial breakdown of the traditional family structure and changes to the demographic profile as well as the re-shaping of the labour market, the Korean Confucian and family oriented welfare regime needed to be transformed in order to respond to these events. The much reduced unit size and the increased number of female-headed households meant that the traditional role of the family as the main caregiver and welfare provider could no longer be counted on. As described above, the increased dependency ratio and the greater index of ageing has raised amongst other demands, the issue of care for the elderly which used to be delegated to the elders' families. Also, the rising number of the elderly alongside the extremely low fertility rate has stimulated proportionally very considerable budgets being spent on social caring for the elderly. Moreover, the state has been required to maintain all other social security systems whilst the difference between contributing workers and those making claims has become even more unbalanced. At the same moment as the labour market had become polarised by gender in respect of working hours and type

of working status, a need for effective work life balance emerged. Therefore, the government could not avoid responding to these socioeconomic changes by expanding the range of state intervention. The next section describes the expansion of welfare provision by the state over the period from the late 1990s and the early 2000s.

3.2.2 The expansion of welfare provision and the gender mainstream movement

The start for noticeable changes in welfare provision was probably the two presidencies of Kim Dae-jung (1998-2002) and Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2007) (Baek, 2009). These two governments have been identified as the transition phase in which the state actively intervened in the new social risks that were emerging as the consequences of the social changes of the late 1990s (Byun, 2000; Y.-M. Kim, 2007, 2010). Whilst the Kim government was the turning point in expanding welfare through there being wider provision, amongst other initiatives, the Roh government deliberately attempted to develop specific coordinated policies to address the linked issues of care and gender, which forms the main focus for this thesis.

3.2.2.1 Kim Dae-jung Government as a turning point (1998-2002)

Kim Dae-jung became the first opposition leader to win election to his country's presidency on 18th December 1997, aided by the strong backing of Korean labour unions. In his inaugural address in February 1998, President Kim Dae-jung characterised his administration as a "Government of the People" (Graham, 2003; Kihl, 2005) and was honoured with the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2000 for his efforts in restoring democracy in South Korea and improving relations with North Korea. However, the Kim administration was unlucky and had to face unprecedented socioeconomic chaos following the economic crisis of 1997-1998 which had a profound impact on society, as up until then, the country had enjoyed full employment (H.-j. Kwon, 2002). As presented in Figure 3-11, the official unemployment rate, according to a survey by the National Statistical Office, reached 7% in 1999 and the youth unemployment rate (15 to 29 year olds) was much higher at 12.2% in the same year. The unemployment rate fell to 3.3% by the end of the Kim government in 2002, but youth unemployment remained at over 7% throughout

the presidency and led to a generation of unemployed young people. Further, Figure 3-12 reveals the extent of polarised income distribution with regards to the Gini co-efficient and the relative poverty rate. The latter gives the proportion of the population under the income level of 50% of median household income, and this had nearly doubled between the early 1990s and 1999. Similarly, the Gini co-efficient soared in around 1998 and then settled at 0.288.

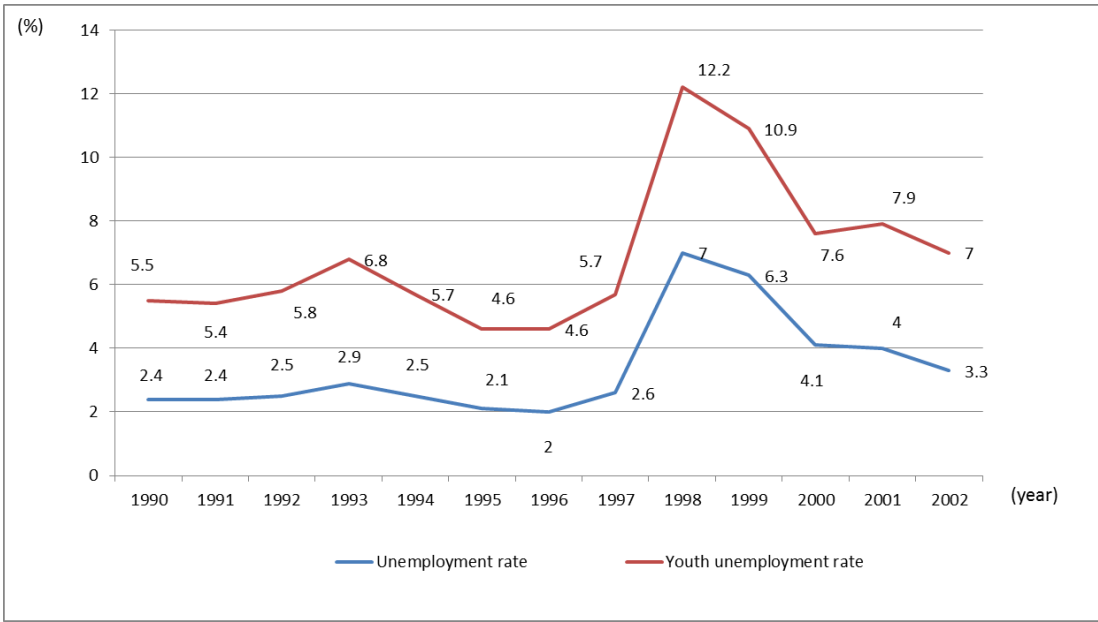


Figure 3-11 Unemployment rate and youth unemployment rate

Source: National Statistical Office, Economically Active Population Chronology, each year

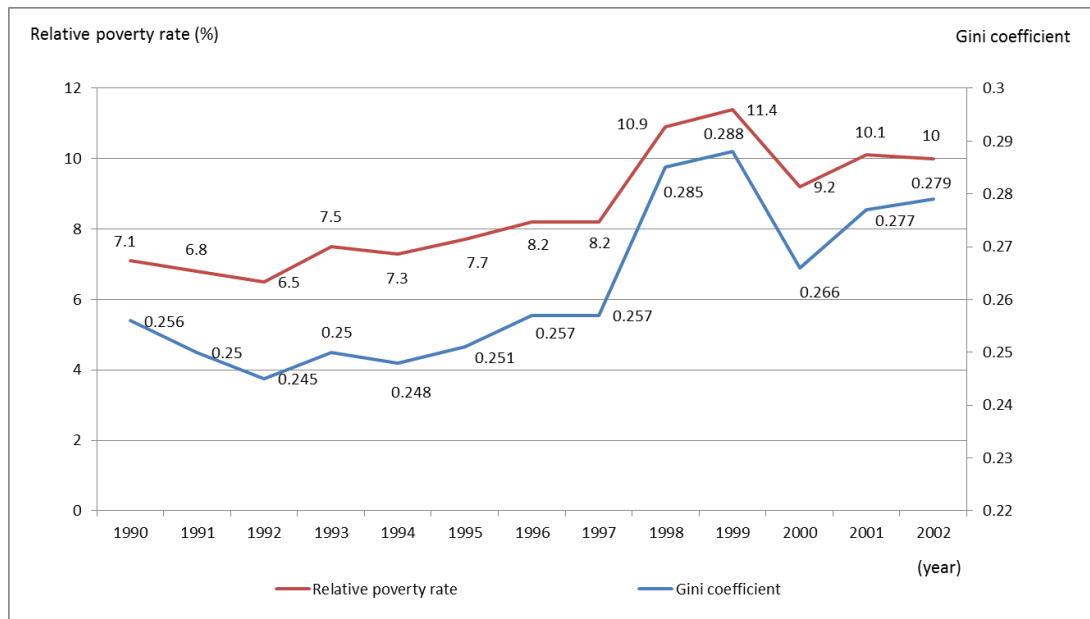


Figure 3-12 Relative poverty rate and Gini co-efficient in the late 1990s and early 2000s

Note:

1. Relative poverty rate is the portion of population number under the level of income set at 50% of median household income.
2. Gini co-efficient measures the inequality of income level. A co-efficient of 0 expresses perfect equality and 1 indicates maximum inequality.

Source: National Statistical Office, Index of Income Distribution, each year

Given the backdrop of the economic crisis which brought high unemployment and further polarised income distribution, the Kim government pursued the ideology of the productive welfare state following the goals of economic growth and improved social welfare provision. Moreover, the changing socioeconomic structures outlined in the previous section, forced the administration to consider fundamental welfare reform through instigating institutional modification. With regards to this, public relief was reorganised and coverage was extended for the four social insurance schemes: the National Pension Scheme, National Health Insurance, Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance and Employment Insurance. The public assistance programme, ‘National Basic Livelihood Security System’ enacted in 1999 which provided a subsistence level of benefits to the extremely poor was completely rebuilt to embody new principals of social protection for the many low income families that had emerged owing to the economic crisis. Moreover, the coverage of social insurance schemes and the eligibility requirements for benefits became relatively more generous than before. In more detail, the total number of people covered by

these social insurance programmes dramatically increased over this time. For example, Employment Insurance coverage was increased from 4.3 million in 1996 to 7.2 million in 2003, that for Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance from 8.1 million to 10.5 million and in the case of the National Pension Scheme, this extended from 7.8 million to cover 17.2 million individuals during the same period (Y. M. Kim, 2008). Therefore, this extension of the coverage and re-focussing of social insurance programmes can be viewed as evidence that the mid 1990s to the mid 2000s was a phase of consolidation of changes being made to the Korean welfare state.

As illustrated in Figure 3-13, there was a notable upward trend in social expenditure and public social expenditure⁵ from around 1998 to 2003, as compared with earlier years⁶ (Ko, 2006). The graph also shows the social expenditure and public social expenditure as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) has been fairly consistent over time which may indicate active intervention through the social security programmes such as: old-age pensions, health and labour market and so on. As shown, in 1999 public expenditure on old-age pensions was the highest proportion at 2.37% of total GDP and the expenditure on labour market support continuously grew during the period. One possible explanation for this could be the increased demand for support following the economic crisis which brought about large scale dismissals from those firms and businesses in sectors that suffered during the recession (Y. M. Kim, 2008; Ko et al., 2012). Health expenditure gradually increased during the time and by 2002 had reached 2.72% of total GDP which was double the figure of 1.44% observed for 1995.

⁵ Social expenditure is the provision by both public and private institutions in order to support households and individuals by providing benefits which rely on financial contributions for their welfare. However, it does not include “market transactions”, i.e. direct payments for a particular good or service or an individual contract or transfer. Also, public social expenditure refers to expenditure incurred by public funds which are from state, regional and local government bodies and social security schemes (OECD, 2007, The Social Expenditure database: An Interpretive Guide SOCX 1980-2003).

⁶ This Figure 3-13 only shows social expenditure and public social expenditure and does not include any expenditure from compulsory private sectors.

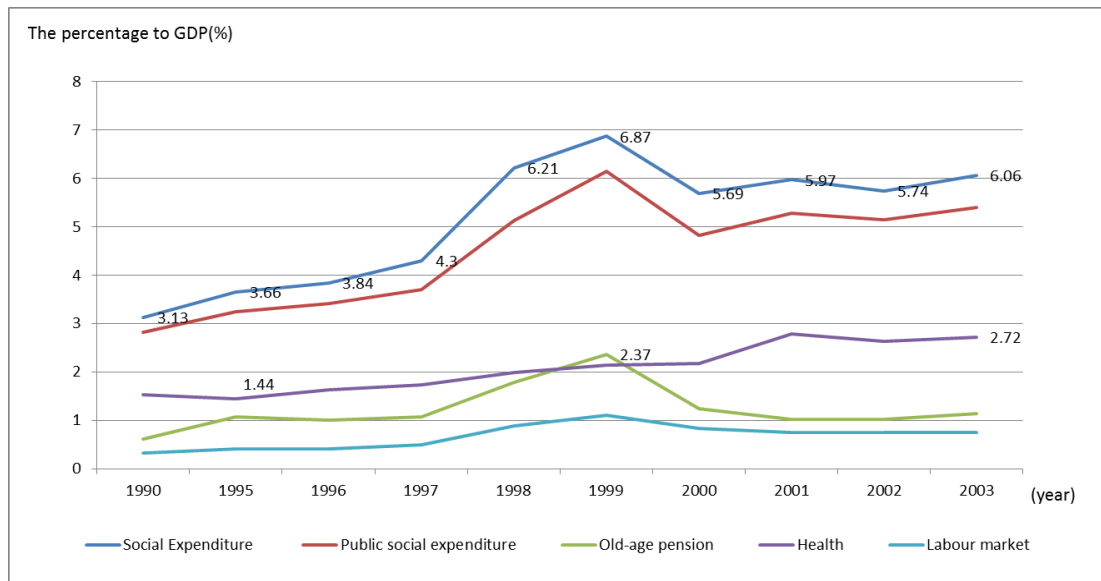


Figure 3-13 Trends in social expenditure and the component elements for the years 1990 to 2003

Source: Gho et al. (2012, p. 248)

Increased social expenditure over this time would indicate that the Kim government was the instigator for creating the basic circumstances for the establishment of extended welfare provision (Y. M. Kim, 2008). This turning point can be observed in social insurance systems where dramatic institutional modification towards universal coverage occurred (Y.-M. Kim, 2006). For example, the National Pension Scheme achieved a ‘nominal’ universal coverage in 1999 and, the universal, but occupationally fragmented, National Health Insurance programme was radically transformed into an inclusive single-payer system. Between 1998 and 2000, the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance and Employment Insurance schemes were extended to cover all workplaces employing at least one worker. In addition, for all social insurance programmes eligibility criteria for non-standard workers were relaxed thereby admitting a significant number of marginal workers to the social protection system. Moreover, a public relief programme which previously had provided a subsistence level of benefits to the extremely poor was completely reorganised in 1999 into a citizenship based programme, termed the National Basic Livelihood Security System. In sum, Kim (2008) and Kwon (2002) have argued strongly that since the economic crisis of the late 1990s, the Kim government through actively carrying out vigorous expansion of welfare provision by reforming

social policy initiatives, moved the state into an inclusive and universal phase of welfare.

3.2.2.2 Roh Moo-hyun Government as a consolidating point (2003-2008)

After the Kim Dae-jung government, President Roh Moo-hyun who defeated conservative elitists from the conservative Grand National Party that had been in power from 2003 to 2007 under President Kim, attempted to develop more coordinated and specific policies to address the problems of economic growth and social inequality and focused on human rights advocacy which was strongly against the prevailing conservatism. He left the Millennium Democratic Party which had been established by Kim Dae-jung to form a new party, the Uri Political Party which means ‘Our Open Party’ in 2003 and which tended to be progressive and more to the left. The Kim government had earlier emphasised the two goals of robust economic growth and improved social welfare provision, giving the policy drive the label the productive welfare state. Similarly, the Roh government pursued the reconciliation of economic growth and social re-distribution as part of the national philosophy (J. K.-c. Oh, 2005). One of the strong discourses underpinning this policy direction was the ideology of having a social investment strategy, which held the expansion of social expenditure as one of key ways for the state to invest in the future. Considering that Korean society had undergone far-reaching changes in its socioeconomic configuration over the preceding years, these factors ratcheted up the demand for more social welfare measures. In addition, during the economic crisis when Korea depended heavily on bailouts from the IMF to keep afloat, there was a considerable increase in numbers of people facing short- and long-term unemployment and the numbers of employees who could be termed the working poor. With Korean society having experienced all these pressures, the strategy of the social investment state, originally proposed in the work “The Third Way” by Anthony Giddens in 1994 was an attractive and relatively powerful idea to those in government. Moreover, the expansion of welfare provision by the state addressed a number of important policy concerns shared by governmental members including: the low fertility rate, the ageing population, the need for job creation schemes, support for service sector industry, and the matter of gender equality (Y.-M. Kim, 2007).

Arising from some of these policy concerns, the issue of care became a key policy agenda during the Roh government particularly with respect to how to support long term care for the elderly and how to provide adequate and appropriate childcare. The former could be linked to the rapidly ageing of the population that had increased demand for care for elderly people whilst the latter could be traced to increased women's labour market participation requiring a revision of arrangements for caring for children, other than simply relying on the stay at home mother. Regarding care for elders, as illustrated in section 3.2.1 in this chapter, the form of the family had changed as it had decreased in size (See Figure 3-1 above). Moreover, the role of the family as the main unit of care giving concerning its members had become outmoded over time, yet the proportion of elderly people needing to be cared for had dramatically increased (See Figures 3-2 and 3.7 above). Further, some traditional family values and customs related to the issue of care have significantly weakened, for example that of the first son in the family who used to take main responsibility for caring for his elderly parents (K. M. Oh & Warnes, 2001). The fading away of this sense of filial duty was underlined in the 'National Survey on Marriage and Fertility Dynamics' carried out by the Presidential Committee on Ageing Society and Population Policy in 2006. That is, they reported that people's expectations of the family as a source of security in retirement and their having a clear line of succession for the family line has weakened (Byun, 2000; Ma, 2005). In parallel, these diminishing aspects of the family have been happening along with the trend for increased women's participation in labour markets. This particular change further exacerbated the difficulty in achieving the balance between women working in the labour market and caring for children when responsibility for the latter used to be delegated to family members, more often than not, the mothers. Overall, these social changes have come together and resulted in care-related needs which could be no longer be provided by family members and, responsibility for resolving them has been given over to the wider society. It has to be noted that under the family-centred orientation of care provision in South Korea, (see section 3.1 above), the duty of carrying out caring work for dependants had been mainly given to women. Thus the shift of the responsibility for resolving care issues away from the family and towards the state has challenged not only the gender roles between men and women but also demanded reconciliation of the work life balance for working mothers.

From an economic perspective, the Roh government was aware that the lack of care provision had to be understood as being linked with concerns about the potential loss of workers from the national labour market. The increased number of dependent elderly people and the decreasing fertility rate were expected to exacerbate the imbalance between ‘the producing age groups’ and ‘the consuming age groups’ in the population in the long term. In addition, the government was aware that this continuous ageing trend created great discordance between the people who were current payers and those who were receivers regarding the various social insurance schemes, especially the National Pension. The worry about the burden of making future payments, particularly on the groups currently contributing to the pension scheme stimulated intergenerational conflict which was regarded as one of the key reasons for the abolishment of the National Pension Scheme in the early 2000s⁷. In addition to conflict between generations, this scheme also brought conflict that was inter-generational. In particular, the growth in the numbers of jobless led to increasing polarization of the labour market, widened gaps in wages and between regular and non-regular workers, as well as between corporations and small-to-medium sized businesses, and the manufacturing and service sectors, owing to the disparities in burdens and benefits that contributed to the overall perception of unfairness in the running of the pension scheme. In brief, the potential economic implications were regarded as serious by the Roh government, which feared a decline in the economically productive population and the dilution of the quality of the labour force. Hence, these key demographic changes, the ageing population and low fertility rate, tended to be approached from an economic perspective.

3.2.2.3 New discourse on care alongside gender equality

Over the duration of these two governments, there was considerable political effort put into accomplishing gender equality. Following the United Nations issuing its statement on gender mainstreaming in the Platform for Action adopted at the fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, the Kim and Roh governments started to accept gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for achieving

⁷ This argument around the abolishment of the National Pension Scheme can be found in many daily newspapers at the time. One of them can be available from <http://c.hani.co.kr/hantoma/443189> [Accessed 27 August 2013]

women's empowerment (Y.-R. Park, 2005). The term gender mainstreaming refers to the objective of bringing gender equality to the heart of development activities. An important element in the mainstreaming strategy is the ambition to have attention paid to gender equality from the initial stages of policy processes so that, potentially, the awareness could influence policy goals, strategies and resource allocations and thus bring about changes in policies, programmes and other activities that could make a real improvement to gender equality in society (Carolyn, 2003). In keeping with this ambition, the Platform for Action in Beijing (1995) recommended that state agencies promote gender equality policies, and subsequently the Korean government instituted governmental organisations that exclusively dealt with gender equality policies (E.-s. Kim, 2008a; T.-H. Kim, 2011).

In more detail, after the conference in Beijing in 1995, the Kim Dae-jung government created the Presidential Commission on Women's Affairs, which later evolved into the Ministry of Gender Equality in 2001 under the Roh Moo-hyun administration. By setting up governmental organisations with an awareness of gender issues, the government had made ongoing efforts to promote gender equality backed up with the adoption of the gender mainstreaming concept as the basic underpinning strategy for advancing gender sensitive policy (T.-H. Kim, 2011). For example, the 'Basic Act on Women's Development' which aimed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment was established immediately after the meeting in Beijing in December 1995. Subsequently, the act was revised eleven times by June 2008, in order to help expand the legal and institutional opportunities and mechanisms for women's social participation. During the amendments of 2002, gender impact assessments became one of the essential tools through which the government aimed to put into practice gender mainstreaming. These mandatory assessments enforced gender equality policies by ensuring that central and local governments made analysis and assessment of the nature of the socioeconomic gaps existing between men and women regarding areas of policy (E.-s. Kim, 2008a; K. Kim, 2008). Regarding gender analysis applied to governmental budgeting, the National Finance Act enacted in 2006 required the submission of gender sensitive budget assessments (Y. Kim, 2008). Upon the creation of this act, the Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) set up the Gender Budgeting Centre to

conduct research concerning the institutionalisation of gender sensitive budgeting, and undertook selected projects from 2007 to 2009 (ibid).

Among the issues concerning gender sensitive perspectives within the policy making process, that of childcare provision was regarded as the most significant since the awareness of gender in caring work caused attention to be drawn to gender relations⁸ in caring work and work life balance. Having noted awareness of caring work, the Roh government transferred the duty of childcare from the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) to the Ministry of Gender and Equality (MGE) in order to comprehend the issue of childcare from a stance that took into consideration gender perspectives (The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee, 2007). Before the transfer of the duty for the governmental administration of childcare under President Roh, a considerably different position had been taken regarding provision of childcare. In brief, governmental intervention used to be focused on supporting low income families and overseeing their children's well-being which had led to a residual and selective system of childcare provision (Yoo, 2002). Unlike the earlier prevailing approach to the treatment of childcare matters, i.e. a residual strategy which had focused on only one group of children, namely those from poorer families, the novel gender perspective shifted the policy focus to include an element of gender sensitive issues. Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that, having undergone critical socioeconomic changes in the labour markets and significant demographic changes, at the same time, the role of women's employment in the workforce was recognised as an important national economic resource that could not be over-looked.

⁸ This research defines gender relations as the different structural limitations men and women experience in employing care services in the care market. As discussed earlier, women's positions in the labour market in South Korea are likely to be marginalised and their roles have been defined either as care giver or as having the dual roles of workers and housewives. These dissimilar conditions have brought about different impacts on decision making between men and women, for instance, whether to employ services or to do the care work by themselves, as well as whether women should take part time or full time work. These potentially negative impacts on women's choices are considered here in the context of gender relations in care practice (see section 2.3 in Chapter 2).

3.2.3 The political interest regarding childcare

Alongside the drive to promote gender equality the demands stimulated by the socioeconomic changes that had occurred since the late 1990s pushed the issue of care into the Korean political arena. The government responded to this issue in 2004 by fully revising the Childcare Act which had been originally enacted in 1991. This revision aimed to establish universal childcare provision and to improve service quality in the sector (Baek & Seo, 2004). Moreover, the issue of childcare was identified as a priority national task and the ‘Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society’ within the Roh administration announced ‘The First Childcare Support Policy’ in 2004, which served as the foundation for the expansion of public childcare and service provision. Subsequently in 2005, the ‘Second Childcare Support Policy’ was launched to set the scene for the implementation of childcare policies. With these two blueprints regarding childcare policy having been outlined, the MGE, announced in 2006 the ‘Saessak Plan’. This report served to reinforce the expansion of public childcare facilities, the promotion of a basic subsidy to parents to support the childcare costs, which was given to the childcare facility managers via the government, as well as a financial childcare assistance scheme awarded to families on the basis of need and income levels. Moreover, the “Saeromaji Plan” of 2006 issued by the Committee on Ageing Society and Population, further provided the ground for childcare systems to develop in Korea by increasing the government budget on childcare assistance and child care facilities (See Table 3-3 below). Therefore, it could be said that during these two governments, it was the Roh government that identified the issue of childcare to be the national main task and tried to bring about a significant policy change (The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee., 2007).

Table 3-1 The main childcare policy announcements during the Roh government administration

Date	The policy announcement	The originating body	The policy aims
June 2004	The First Childcare Support Policy	Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society	- fostering future work force - encouraging women’s working

			participation
May 2005	The Second Childcare Support Policy	Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fostering future work force - encouraging women's working participation - raising fertility rate
July 2006	Saessak Plan: Mid-Long Term Plan on Childcare	The Ministry of Gender Equality & Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enhancement of universal childcare provision - providing better quality of childcare provision
July 2006	Saeromaji Plan: The First Low Fertility Rate and Ageing Society Basic Plan	The Committee on the Low Fertility Rate and Ageing Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enhancement of social responsibility for caring - building the environment for work life balance and gender equality - fostering a sound future generation

3.3 Childcare provision at a crossroad

During the Roh administration, a response to the political interest in childcare in terms of an appropriate policy was not easily reached owing to the structure of the extant market in care provision created in the 1990s under the Kim Young-sam government. To illustrate the nature of the market which formed the background to the childcare reforms during the period of the Roh administration, a basic outline is given below.

In the 1990s (i.e. under the Kim Young-sam and the Kim Dae-jung governments) and also at the start of the Roh Moo-hyun government, childcare provision was dominated by private sector establishments owned by incorporated organisations or by individuals who pursued profits. These comprised establishments termed: 'incorporated organizations', 'centre based individual' and 'home based individual' providers. Although there were some publicly funded childcare centres operated by

the state, local government or alternatively, by various social welfare corporations, termed ‘national/public’ and ‘legal-corporation’ facilities, the number of public childcare centres among the total of providers in the care market was very small. One more category of childcare facilities that were available was those owned by entrepreneurs and run for their workers and located in or near to the work place, termed ‘workplace’ facilities, but these too made up a very small proportion of the total provision. Figure 3-14 gives the number of childcare facilities by ownership, from 1990 to 2002, shown according to each governmental period, i.e. for the Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung periods. As indicated, the total number of childcare centres increased over the decade from 1990 to 2002 with the main increase being in private sector provision, that is, in incorporated organisations, centre based individual as well as home based individual facilities. Therefore, when the Roh government was considering reforms to the sector it was faced with this private provider dominance in the care market. Faced with this, the governmental approach to childcare services was at a crossroads whereby a crucial decision had to be made regarding whether to continue this private dominated care provision, integrate the private providers into a system of public childcare provision or to find a middle way, adopting a policy situated somewhere between the two extreme positions.

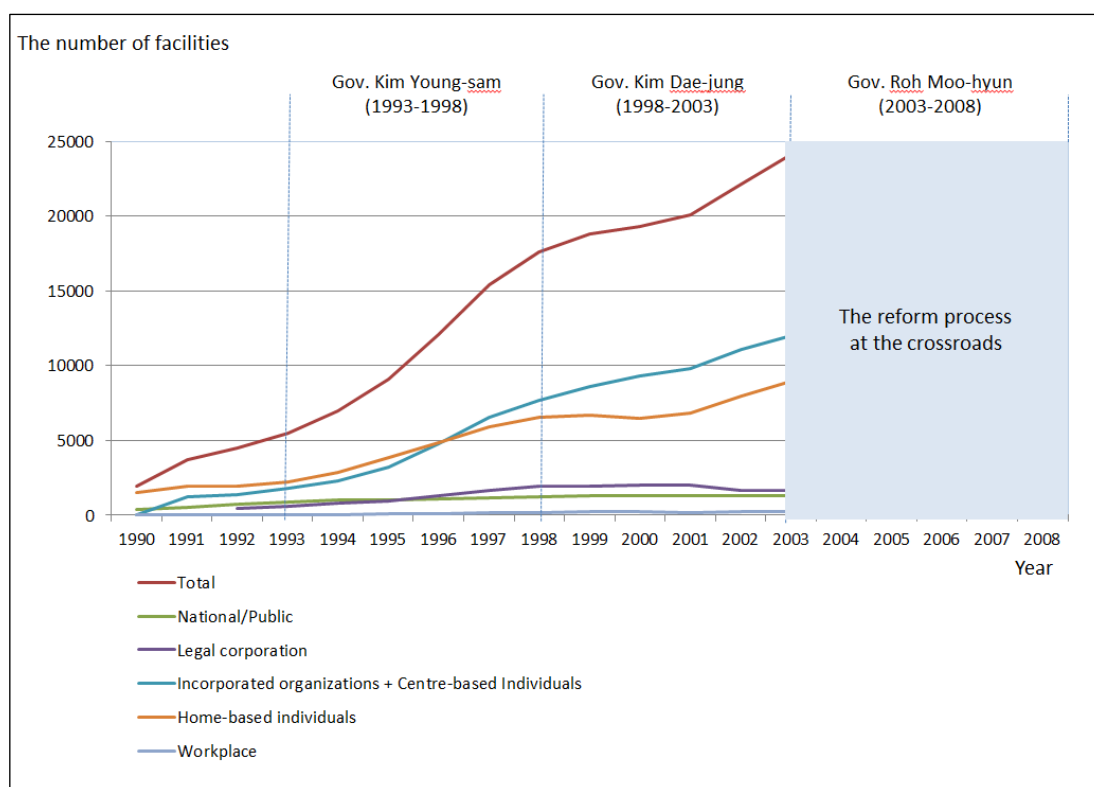


Figure 3-14 The number of childcare centres by ownership for the period from 1990 to 2003 by each governmental period

Note: This shows the trend in the number of childcare centres by category of provision for each governmental period up until 2003. The trends that developed during the Roh government period are explored in Chapter 5.

To explain why these major increases in the number of each type of private provider in childcare provision occurred, it is necessary to review policy decisions made during the presidency of Kim Young-sam (Yoo, 2002). Kim Young-sam of the Democratic Liberal Party was elected president in 1992. This was following the first truly democratic and fully contested election since the Park Chung-hee military coup in 1961, called the ‘May 16th coup’ (Graham, 2003; S. Kim, 2011). President Kim Young-sam was keen on achieving political reforms that would uproot authoritarian practices and augment democratic legitimacy in the country during the first half of his presidential term. Gradually he shifted his focus to enhancing the economy’s global competitiveness involving deregulation and privatisation, with the pursuit of the key economic values of freedom of choice, market liberalisation and economic growth (S. Kim, 2011). In particular, given this market driven ideology, the economy required the maintenance of the increasing number of working women that had been occurring since the Park Jung-hee government in the late 1960s (see above). The

Kim Young-sam government thus responded to the demands for childcare from working mothers but only through providing residual and selective public services intended for children from low income families. However, the government announced a policy plan in 1995 entitled the ‘Three Year Plan on the Expansion of Childcare Centres (1995-1997)’ (Jang, 2002; Yoo, 1999, 2002) as a blue print for enhancing childcare provision. The target was to increase provision over the three years, especially that of publicly funded childcare centres. This short term policy plan aimed to increase the total number of childcare centres to 7,590 by 1997, composed of 3,150 public childcare centres (41%), 3,000 private childcare centres (40%) and 1,440 workplace childcare centres (19%).

By the end of the three year plan, the government had actually exceeded its overall goal with the total number of childcare centres reaching 15,375 facilities. This amounted to almost 120% of the original target, according to which the anticipated total had been 7,590 but those actually built numbered 15,375 centres. This overall total obscures the fact that the outcome of the policy was a large rise in the number of private sector facilities. For each type of facility different levels of expansion were achieved with the private sector i.e. the incorporated organizations, centre based and home based individual providers had rapidly grown in this time period achieving approximately 237% of the intended expansion. On the contrary, there was little success experienced regarding building public childcare centres for which only 53.1% of the target was achieved and similarly with respect to workplace provision, only 8.4% of the anticipated number was realised (Yoo, 1999). Figure 3-15 contrasts the original targets of the policy as set out in the plan and the real outcomes in numbers of facilities in 1997. From this data it is clear that the Roh reform of childcare policy which would probably require the expansion and improvement of provision, was facing, from its very inception, a heavy bias towards and reliance on the services offered by private sector providers.

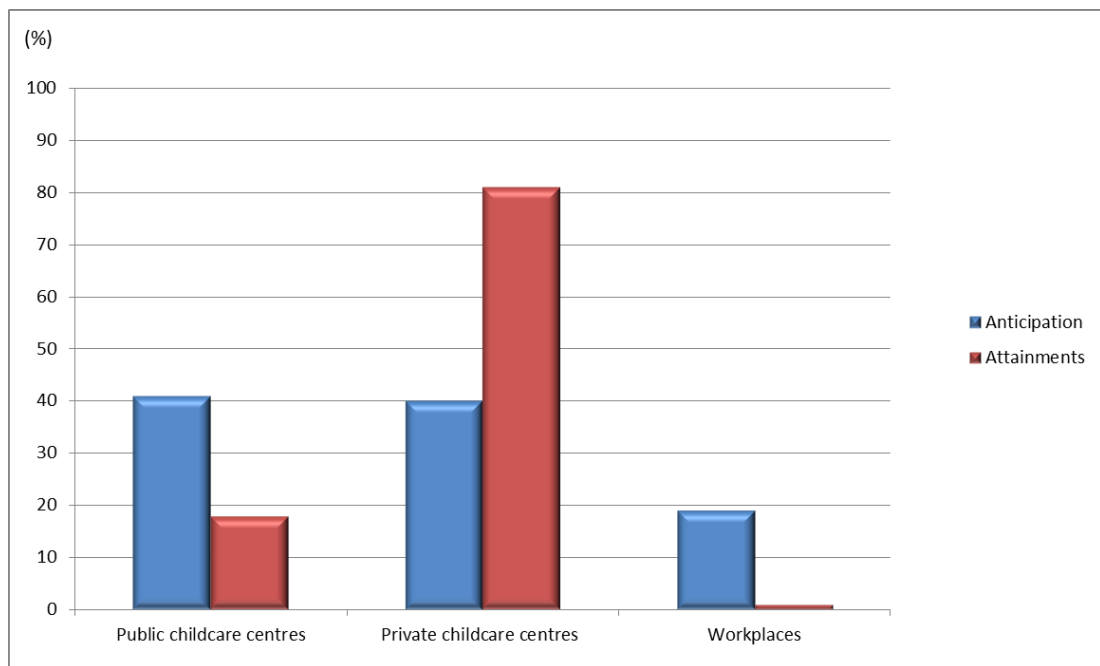


Figure 3-15 The anticipated numbers of public, private and workplace childcare centres according to the ‘Three Year Plan on the Expansion of Childcare Centres (1995-1997)’ and the actual numbers achieved by 1997

Source: Statistics on Childcare in 2012, MHW / Yoo (1999)

One of the possible explanations for the very large rise in the numbers of private, run for profit, childcare facilities was that the Kim Young-sam government had encouraged entrepreneurs to build childcare facilities by giving them support with subsidised loans and the private business owners were allowed to pay off their loans over a long period and when they earned profits from running the facilities. Moreover, the entrepreneurs preferred building new facilities in locations where the land was relatively inexpensive and where they could reasonably expect to attract business from families with young children. Hence, the outskirts of medium sized towns where urban development was on-going were favoured whilst rural locations and the centres of cities were less so.

At this time, the Ministry of Health and Welfare which dealt with childcare as a residual welfare service insisted that the government treat the public and the private providers differently. Thus, although the state may have offered incentives for the setting up of new facilities, unlike public childcare centres, the private providers received no support from the government for the day to day running of facilities and

care workers' salaries. Therefore, some private centres went into financial bankruptcy as they could not sustain their business operations (Yoo, 1999). The lack of governmental financial support for the private childcare centres has been suggested as the one of reasons for the low quality of services mentioned by parents regarding the care offered by many private centres, as compared to public ones. With regards to the issue of care quality, there was little regulation of the private providers under the Ministry of Health and Welfare, as these were left, in effect, to be run as self-contained businesses. Obtaining permission from the local authority to open a private sector facility was fairly straight forward and was usually granted without the premises or care service being inspected or subjected to any accreditation process. Once the private owners had registered themselves with the relevant local authority, from 1992 they were allowed to operate under an arrangement termed a 'self-declaration system' and without any further government restraint (MHW, 2012). In sum, the backdrop against which reform of childcare policy was to be constructed appears to have been firmly embedded in a reliance on services provided by the private sector. Moreover, there was loose regulation regarding maintaining any system for monitoring the service quality offered by such providers. These features underpinned the belief in allowing a free market to operate for the distribution of childcare with minimal state intervention that was entirely consistent with the legacy of the previous government of Kim Young-sam.

3.4 Summary

Korean welfare provision which has been described as 'Confucian' or 'family centred' was remodelled to take into account the socioeconomic changes and the labour market situation that prevailed from the late 1990s. Regarding this, as discussed above, the governments led by Kim and Roh expanded social expenditure on welfare in order to respond to these emergent issues. As will be explored in Chapters 6 and 7, welfare expansion took place alongside the growth of the gender mainstreaming movement with one outcome being that the political concerns about promoting women's interests, particularly improving their work life balance, moved to the centre of political attention. The focus of these two empirical Chapters 6 and 7 is to probe the Roh government's reform of childcare policy in light of the strong

dominance of the private providers in the care market that has been accounted for in this chapter. In conclusion, it would appear that it is appropriate to identify this challenge as being a crossroads for childcare. That is, the Roh government faced a set of crucial decisions with respect to care policy reforms that would have far-reaching consequences regarding whether or not the socialisation of childcare, in particular, was to be rolled out across the country.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter explains the methodological aspects of the research, starting with the examination of the ontological and epistemological stance of the study, which includes discussion of feminist approaches to methodology and justification of my choice of appropriate methods. Drawing on feminist perspectives regarding methodology, a mixed methodology combining quantitative and qualitative approaches is deployed. More specifically, secondary data analysis is employed as a quantitative phase in order to explore the changes that can be observed regarding results in the modes of public childcare services occurring over time. For explanation of the political processes and competing discourses around care issues during the era of political reform, in-depth interviews and documentary analysis are used. The chapter is divided into the following three sections:

1. An outline of feminist approaches to methodology.
2. The quantitative phase is justified with regards to the secondary data analysis that was undertaken. Here I define secondary data analysis and discuss the nature of the data considered for the purpose of exploring the resultant changes in the focal phenomena over the time period of interest.
3. Finally, regarding the qualitative phase, there is justification of why the two qualitative methodological techniques of in-depth interviewing and documentary analysis were selected and how the data were collected and subsequently analysed. There is reflection on my fieldwork in South Korea. In more detail, this focuses on the interview procedures, including constructing interview schedules and choosing purposive sampling regarding recruiting the interviewees. Also, the ethical issues surrounding implementing these two methods during the research are discussed.

4.1 Feminist approaches in methodology

There are two key philosophical issues in social research; ontology and epistemology. These two approaches to understanding the world relate to different views of the social world. Whilst ontology refers to the debate concerning whether the social world is independent from how humans interpret or conceive it, epistemology is concerned with how to know and learn about the world. These have implications regarding the methodological stances taken by researchers, concerning, for example, what can be known, how might we come to gain knowledge about a subject, how to describe and analyse the chosen research methods used to collect data, how to assess their value, how to solve the dilemmas that usage of certain techniques can cause and to explore the relationship between the fieldwork methods and the interpretation of the data and outcomes of a study (Letherby, 2003).

With regards to its ontological and epistemological platforms, feminist approaches to research start with the assumption that the nature of reality in society is unequal and hierarchical (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Moreover, proponents of feminist research take a critical position regarding questions on women. That is, ‘the single most distinguished feature of feminist scholarly work has been its overtly political nature. Feminism’s commitment to material and social change has played a significant role in understanding traditional academic boundaries between the personal and the political’ (Kemp & Squires, 1997, p. 4). This perspective is framed by their having a feminist consciousness which can be defined as a genuine awareness and understanding of the experiences of being a woman in a gender divided society and based on this, they seek to illuminate the unequal position of women in a sexist society. Owing to this awareness, most feminist scholars try to generate knowledge that can bring change in the hierarchical social relations relating to gender (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Stanley & Wise, 1993). In other words, feminist researchers aim to bring women back to featuring at the centre of human society.

Further, a feminist methodological standpoint should provide an understanding of women’s experiences, as they understand them, and their interpretation of gender relations (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Similarly, Cook and Fonow (1980)

emphasized the need for research to elicit something which can lead to change in women's lives whilst adding the view that feminist perspectives are often characterized by creativity, spontaneity and improvisation in the selection of both research topic and methods. In other words, notwithstanding these tendencies, it is important not just to carry out more research on women but to develop an appropriate approach and engage in studies that can be instrumental in producing a research for women. That is, when scholars adopt a feminist methodology they should have the political commitment to generate useful knowledge as well as to make a difference in women's lives. Moreover, Kelly et al. (1994) opined that feminism is grounded in political as well as academic concerns and in a similar vein, Hoggart (2004) asserted that 'feminism can be defined as a position with the political aim of challenging discrimination against women and/or promoting greater equality between the sexes' (Becker, 2004, p. 104).

Given these passionately held academic and political orientations towards exploring implications of the social world for women's lives, researchers need to enter people's lives. Therefore, many feminist scholars advocate deploying a qualitative perspective that draws on methods that involve the researcher in actively listening to what respondents say, for example, the collection of life histories and oral narratives as well as carrying out in-depth and biographical interviews. These techniques entail an interviewer recording, either on tape or on paper, the words of another person and, with regards to this, Oakley (1981) concluded that the qualitative in-depth interview is the best tool for eliciting information about people's lives.

The debate regarding what Oakley (1998) has termed the gendered paradigm divide is of relevance to my current study. This division refers to the association of the qualitative perspective with feminine values and in-depth interpretivist approaches whilst the quantitative paradigm tends to be linked with a masculine and positivistic treatment. Although Oakley declared that having a certain allegiance to the qualitative paradigm is necessary for a researcher to be considered a feminist, this does not mean that investigations carried out under the feminist school should only follow this particular paradigm as it is not always the most appropriate. For instance, there might be women who do not want to share their lives in the public domain and

as with any qualitative investigations that involve taking a relatively small sample as the focus of a study, valid generalizations cannot be achieved. Furthermore, in-depth interviews may not always be appropriate to the issue or the respondents since there is always a power shift between the respondent and researcher during the research process. In addition, Letherby (2003) asserted that it is crucial to make research aims very specific and justify the relation between the research methods and the study's purpose, which then leaves the researcher seeking to discover suitable methods for carrying out the research in practice.

In fact, Skinner et al. (2005) expressed the opinion that both quantitative and qualitative approaches can be used for feminist research as long as they are appropriate to the research purposes. Certainly, as Jayaratne and Stewart (1991: 223) underlined, quantitative methodological techniques can never provide the kind of richly textured 'feeling for the data' that qualitative ones can. However, multivariate statistical analyses of large data sets can provide contextual analyses of people's lived experiences and these treatments allow for the incorporation of a large number of variables, thus permitting the simultaneous testing of elaborate and complex theoretical models. In sum, from these debates it is evident that choosing a suitable approach is more important than complying with a stereotyped tradition regarding the selection of the research paradigm as sound justification of choice rests on matching the research aims and the tools adopted. In light of this, the approach deployed in this study is that of a mixed method combining qualitative work (i.e. in-depth interviews and documentary analysis) with quantitative treatments (i.e. secondary data analyses). In the next section I explain why I have chosen each of these and what I expect to achieve through their use.

4.2 The quantitative phase of the study: secondary data analysis

For the quantitative phase of the research, secondary data analysis was employed as the exploratory research design which aims to understand the changes that could be observed regarding results in public childcare services that had occurred over time. The exploratory research is for clarifying 'your understanding of a problem' (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012, p. 78) and it involves the purpose of discovery

(Miles & Huberman, 1984; Robson, 2002). Such an approach is often deployed in research to understand those areas which are under researched (ibid). Particularly, my research question about the effect of gender politics on the current modes of provision regarding public childcare services, has, to date, been little explained through the direct investigation of a policy problem and competing discourses during the reform of the childcare policy. Nonetheless, the understanding of the context, that is, what has been changed regarding childcare provision, may be identified through the process of conducting the exploratory stage which attempts ‘to find out what is happening, particularly in little-understood situations, to seek new insight, to ask questions, to assess phenomena in a new light, to generate ideas and hypotheses for further research’ (Robson, 2002, pp. 270-271). Therefore, this exploratory research design is conducted by drawing on the analysis of secondary data which enables the researcher to ascertain from selected large scale surveys and related statistical data sets, whether there were any changes in institutional settings and/or with regard to the actual conditions under which care is carried out and received.

Having set out this exploratory research design for the quantitative phase, analysis was carried out on the data sets which have been made available for others, in addition to the original investigators (Pienta, O’Rourke, & Franks, 2011; Shamblen & Dwivedi, 2010). Whilst primary data is that collected from original sources such as surveys and large scale censuses often taking the form of official data sets. The re-analysis of existing data may not be regarded as fully adequate by some social scientists who are of the opinion that data should always be original and not have been collected by someone else. However, Hakim dismissed this claim and stated that ‘original research can often be done with ‘old’ data’. Moreover, secondary data analysis offers some advantages over new research and there are certain types of research that can only be achieved through secondary data analysis (Hakim, 1982, p. 1). In addition, there are further benefits, for example, cost savings and saving the time that would otherwise be spent in conducting fresh surveys and having the opportunity to employ longitudinal data sets as secondary data across a specific time period (Trzesniewski et al., 2011).

4.2.1 The rationale for using secondary data analysis

The changes regarding public childcare services over time between the pre and post reforms are focused around two key time points: 2002 and 2009. This is because the early 2000s were regarded as a critical time when political concerns in relation to the crisis in caring and debates turned to the consideration of the actual reformation of social care services so as to socialise caring (See Chapter 3). This time was also critical in terms of gender politics being activated by the gender mainstreaming movement, as discussed in the following chapter, Chapter 6. Therefore, by consulting the National Survey on the Attitudes of Using Childcare Services conducted each year, including 2002 and 2009, it was possible to compare changes in childcare services on a longitudinal basis and hence to critically evaluate the outcomes of the policy changes. Moreover, as this national survey aimed to establish primary statistical data that examined the situation of childcare provision and demand for it and also the need for informal care, using it as secondary data for the purposes of the current study can shed light on any outcome changes regarding the institutional settings of care provision and the conditions under which the care was carried out and received.

More specifically, the survey of 2009 was conducted under the regulations of the Childcare Act which was amended in January 2004 to ensure that both central and local governments made plans for childcare provision by examining the demand for childcare services. To obtain this demand-related data, national surveys on childcare provision and its usage were required to be held every five years. The survey was set up to cover two parts: households and facilities, and, to date, has been carried out twice, first in 2004 and again in 2009 with the third scheduled for completion in 2013. Both surveys in 2004 and 2009 were conducted by the Ministry of Health Welfare and Family in conjunction with the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education. The survey in 2004 produced a significant statistical data set used to estimate the mid to long term demand for childcare services. Likewise, the survey in 2009 formed a comprehensive data set that was aimed at guiding the direction of childcare policy. Even before these two national surveys in 2004 and 2009, a national survey on childcare provision and demand for it was researched by the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs in 2002.

Similar to the surveys in 2004 and 2009, the survey in 2002 was used to establish mid to long term childcare policy and to estimate the necessary budget for childcare.

These large scale survey data sets, especially the surveys held in 2002 and 2009, were employed in this thesis, as snapshots to ascertain whether there were any changes in institutional settings and the actual conditions under which care was carried out and received. These two surveys can be regarded as equivalent data sets, in terms of size and contents. With respect to these, firstly, the participants comprised parents who employed childcare services and the facility owners/managers who provided the services to the market. The survey originally targeted 3,560 households in 2002 and 4,901 in 2009 as research subjects, with a response rate of 95% from targeted households that is, 3,369 households in 2002 and 4,631 in 2009. For the facility owners/managers, the scope of the survey in 2002 included all the childcare facilities in the country, and 14,881 childcare centres, i.e. 74% of the total number, responded. However, in 2009, the researchers only targeted 10% of the total number of facilities, i.e. 3,200 childcare facilities. Secondly, regarding the contents covered by the survey, the questionnaire for each year had three aspects: households, children and childcare facilities. The questions on households addressed the general characteristics of household members, their economic background and the nature of the co-habitation patterns involving children, parents and others. With regard to children, the questions were about the parents' experience of using childcare services, their demand for these services and the actual coverage of the formal childcare services, and finally, to what extent informal care in addition to employing formal care was needed by the parents. The owners/managers of childcare centres were asked diverse questions about their facility's environment and operation, the training of care workers and programme management, amongst other issues. By drawing on the national surveys held in 2002 and 2009 it was possible for me to compare the institutional settings of the care provision and conditions in care practice, as well as any failings in the institutional settings and the care practice under which care was being carried out and received, which the policy reforms may not have been able to resolve. Below, I review some of the challenges encountered while using the national surveys.

4.2.2 Methodological issues arising when using the secondary data

Most of these data sets were originally designed by authorities in consultation with panels of experts and close attention was paid to including broad measures to provide the widest understanding of the family and childcare issues being studied. Nonetheless, some of the issues and variables included in both 2002 and 2009 did not perfectly match the analytical framework developed in my study, which considered the three dimensions of: affordability, adequacy and autonomy in care provision (See Chapter 2). Because of this discordance, the scope of this study needed to be rather restricted and depended on whether relevant variables had been measured in both the national surveys: on occasions when it emerged that a variable had been omitted, that is, a measure related to my dimensions was not captured by the survey data, I substituted appropriate alternative variables so as ensure my secondary analysis remained robust and fitted the analytical framework and research questions. In sum, I sought to deploy data that included relevant constructs and ensured that these were represented by valid measures and had robust control variables (Hakim, 1982; Trzesniewski et al., 2011).

In terms of the comparison of the outcomes between two focal times, that is, before and after the reforms, this researcher faced the challenge of matching each outcome with a similar item in order to elicit whether there had been a significant change during the time period. It emerged that some values were not equivalent and could not be compared with each other over the period of interest. In this case, I had to go back to the original questionnaires which had been given to the respondents in the national survey for each year and check these carefully in order to assess whether the questions were identical and whether it was reasonable to compare them. Sometimes, there was no direct equivalent or the issue had been missed out entirely from the survey, so I endeavoured to use only the cases which were available and suitable for this study. Where no comparison was possible, I have given a footnote explaining the situation when reporting the data in Chapter 5. Another challenge regarding the comparison of the outcomes was found when it emerged that each survey had deployed different scales to measure the reported outcomes. For example, in measuring the satisfaction with childcare services, the Likert scale format used in 2009 was based on a five point scale, whilst for 2002, a four point one was adopted.

These different scales of measurement could have influenced the results and thus it was deemed inappropriate to attempt to directly compare them (A. Bryman & Teevan, 2004). Hence, for this, I decided that it was not appropriate to compare these two data sets from 2002 and 2009 and had to seek out other data because I wanted to assure a rigorous analysis of parental attitudes about employing childcare services over the period of interest.

To compare the data on outcomes over time, for some data I needed to merge some items in order to make them comparable. As I was concerned with interpreting all the meanings for each item included in the surveys, such items needed to be carefully translated into English in order to avoid losing the original meaning in Korean. Further, because secondary data can take on a number of meanings for the users, it is necessary to make some ambiguous terms or expressions clear, and this was an important consideration that had to be addressed before incorporating the survey data into this thesis (Shamblen & Dwivedi, 2010). For instance, the information in the survey in 2009 regarding the extent of the financial burden of childcare costs was divided into five categories; ‘very burdensome’, ‘burdensome’, ‘reasonable’, ‘no burden’ and ‘not at all’. In 2002 there were five different categories: ‘very burdensome’, ‘burdensome’, ‘reasonable’, ‘a bit expensive but I still want to use the service’, and ‘do not know’. In this case, it was quite a challenge to merge them into one table with one system of categorization so that I could compare the responses for each year. I therefore sought to understand the deeper meaning underpinning each survey question, as well as the items, and tried to grasp the intentions of the setters of the questions for each survey.

4.3 The qualitative phase of the study: in-depth interviews and policy documentary analysis

The first phase was exploratory aiming to demonstrate the nature of any changes between pre and post reforms. These changes which have occurred, if any, demand a deeper understanding as to why things turned out as they did after the application of reforming policies. To address the research question with respect to the extent and nature of the impact gender politics and what has happened during the socialisation

of care, it is deemed appropriate to move into an explanatory research design. Explanatory research aims to explain a situation or a problem (Robson, 2002), i.e. investigating the relationship between the identified and explored variables (Saunders et al., 2012). Therefore, this qualitative approach is embedded in explanatory research which has the purpose of improving the understanding of concepts obtained from the exploratory research (Alan Bryman, 2012), presented in Chapter 5.

This current study addresses how to make a difference in women's lives by raising relevant issues around political reforms concerning the socialisation of care. In so doing, I take a constructionist view of the social world, that is, in this research the epistemological perspective considers social phenomena to be constructed by people or their actions. The epistemological basis of a study relates to how concepts or theory are generated to interpret social phenomena and there are extensive debates as to whether a researcher can be objective and produce objectivity in a study (J. Ritchie & J. Lewis, 2003)⁹. With respect to this, the studies that engage in qualitative investigations more usually involve an inductive stance. This differs from undertakings that are from the quantitative paradigm in that these start with a theory or proposition which is relied on to shape closely the subsequent data collection (Silverman, 2011) whereas the qualitative epistemological approach tends to allow the theory to emerge from the data that has been gathered. Proponents of constructionism look to external social structures and institutions and consider the ways in which these shape social reality as they contend that the world is socially constructed through different forms of knowledge (Flick, 2009 cited in Goodman 1978). Thus, given my adopted epistemological foundation of constructivism, which largely lies within the qualitative paradigm, qualitative tools are deemed appropriate as they allow me to capture the actions and interpretations of people during their

⁹ Epistemologists are concerned with ways of knowing about the world. Some scientists in the natural sciences believe that phenomena can be seen independently and remain uninfluenced by the interaction with researchers and thus researchers can be objective in their approach to investigations. Other scholars, more usually in the social sciences have argued that the social world is affected by the process of being studied and that the relationship between the researcher and social phenomena is interactive. Given this, scholars are permitted a degree of subjectivity but must still carry out robust credible research (Becker, 2004).

social interactions (Flick, 2009; Silverman, 2011). These qualitative tools are combined with quantitative analyses to enhance the robustness of my study outcomes.

Having considered the constructivist position of this research regarding policy on reforming public childcare, overall, I have chosen to undertake a largely qualitative methodological strategy, with a supporting role allocated to the exploratory quantitative findings. With respect to this, Snape and Spencer (2003) delineated that qualitative research tools are suitable for addressing research questions that demand descriptions or explorations of social reality within specific contexts. They are particularly effective for investigating issues that show actors' involvement with certain processes or events which need to be investigated and for exploring processes emerging over time (J. Ritchie & J. Lewis, 2003). It should be noted that this research endeavour is policy oriented and as such, embraces not only assessing the final policy decision but also investigation of the decision making process and policy formulation, implementation and evaluation stages (Becker 2004). Moreover, Berg (2007) added that these tools can capture individuals' emotions and other subjective aspects associated with the naturally evolving lives of individuals and groups (L, 2012), and according to Nelson (1990), in-depth interviews are the best way to gather information that is somewhat sensitive and subjective. These advantages prompted this researcher to employ in-depth interviews as a technique with the aim of exploring the political values and beliefs of the policymakers deeply involved in the reform of public childcare.

There are two major means of collecting data when undertaking in-depth interviews, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. To begin with, unstructured interviewing tends to be very similar in character to a conversation, as there may be one single question that the interviewer asks to which the interviewee is encouraged to respond to freely. To keep the conversation going, the interviewer simply probes any points that seem worthy of being followed up (Burgess, 1984). With regard to the semi-structured interview, the researcher usually refers to a list of questions that are important to the study or a list of fairly specific topics to be covered and this is often referred to as the interviewing guide or schedule. In this situation, the questions being asked do not to adhere to an exact planned schedule, but are addressed as and

when the conversation moves on (Berg, 2007; A. Bryman & Teevan, 2004; Flick, 2009). This type of interview is likely to follow a semi-structured research interview approach, so that specific issues can be emphasized and data elicited (A. Bryman & Teevan, 2004). One of the aims of my research, as described earlier, is to explore the political conflicts and difficulties regarding gender issues during the reform of public childcare policy. Such conflicts can emerge as informal power relations or emotional responses without ever being recorded in government documents or minutes of formal meetings and in order to capture the nature of the debates surrounding the reforms, in-depth interviews that are semi-structured and follow a pre-set interviewing guide have been chosen as the most appropriate form of interview.

In addition to the in-depth interviews, documentary analysis is undertaken in order to establish the policy environment and to provide context for the interviews. Yanow (2000) claimed that document analysis can provide background information for conversational interviews with key actors, such as: legislators, agency directors and staff, community members and representatives of interest groups. Thus, insight regarding the matters covered in the relevant policy documents can help supply me with background information for the interviews with the selected key policy actors (Scott, 1990). Documents that are the source of a great deal of textual material of potential interest (A. Bryman & Teevan, 2004) can, in this current research, take the form of: chronological policy reports, laws, memoranda, government minutes of meetings, related committee and research institute reports, press releases (newspapers, journals, conference papers), financial bills, budgets and accounts, records of public hearings and ministerial statements. Considering that the research investigates the political processes and actual policies which have informed public childcare services over time, the outcomes arrived at through the discussions with interviewees about policy required support from the substantive evidence which has been reported in written accounts and/or published. Therefore, the relevant policy documents were deemed to serve as the principal artefacts from which I could understand how, according to the policy documents, a policy problem was conceptualized and I could make an evaluation of this (Freeman & Maybin, 2011).

Freeman and Maybin (2011) described the relationship between policy documents and actual policy responses as being a metaphorical relationship since documents show the problems and purposes of policy. Moreover, the practices of government become formalised to the extent that they are documented (Smith, 1984, 1990: 217; cited in Freeman and Maybin 2011). In addition, Lewis (2004) commented that documents can be elusive, implying that many researchers do not get access to those beyond published sources that are in the public domain, such as government reports and policy papers, and that researchers may have to rely on press commentary that can give an indication to as how a policy was received and debated in certain circles. However, documentary analysis is adopted here in order to shed light on the political discourse around care issues and to establish the nature of the political environment during the reform period.

Although documentary analysis offers my study considerable insights, documents themselves cannot be regarded as objective accounts of a state of affairs as different actors express through documents the perspective that reflects their own position (A. Bryman & Teevan, 2004; Scott, 1990). In fact, Scott (1990) claimed the four criteria of: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and are useful for assessing the quality of the evidence in documents. To begin with, authenticity refers to whether the evidence is genuine and is of unquestionable origin. Secondly, credibility should be considered as it refers to whether the documentary source is biased in outlook. Usually, the writers of documents have their own aims when publishing and thus their documents can be interesting, precisely because of the biases they reveal, particularly when compared to others' publications. Thirdly, representativeness of the evidence refers to the general problem of assessing the degree to which the evidence supports the points being advanced in the document. Finally, meaning concerns whether the evidence is clear and comprehensive (A. Bryman & Teevan, 2004; Scott, 1990). Regarding representativeness and meaning, there is a debate about whether documents should be thought to have a distinct level of reality. For instance, Atkinson and Coffey (2004) claimed that documents should be regarded as forming simply the context, which means they cannot be viewed as coterminous with the particular individual social actors who wrote them or those who subsequently read them. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to consider them as informing us

about the context in which they were produced (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997 cited in Silverman 1997).

4.3.1 Fieldwork in South Korea

With in-depth interviews and policy documentary analysis as the two key research techniques best suited to my study, I carried out fieldwork in South Korea for three and half months between September and December in 2011. In May 2012, after I had returned from the main field work trip and was in the UK, three respondents were interviewed using Skype as the means of communication. Nowadays, the use of Skype as a fieldwork tool relying on computer mediated communication is welcomed as an opportunity for richer and more effective communication than previously envisaged (Ess, 2004; Grinyer, 2007; Illingworth, 2001). These interviews were necessary in order to check a few pieces of evidence that had not been clarified, and which had remained rather ambiguous throughout earlier interviews. During this period spent carrying out the in-depth interviews, I had to review constantly the relevant policy documents in order to understand the trajectory of the policy process over time and the political interventions made by the key policy actors, especially those whom I intended to interview. I had to be aware before meeting them of what they had achieved during the focal time and what the policy documents reported regarding their roles and contributions, including information identifying their failures and limitations. Below, the process of the fieldwork in Seoul including drawing up the interviewing schedule, sampling for recruiting the interviewees and the collection of the documents, is discussed.

4.3.1.1 Preliminary phase

Prior to travelling to South Korea for the fieldwork, a semi-structured interview schedule was carefully developed so as to make my questions clear and to ensure that my respondents grasped what I wanted to know from them (Berg, 2007). With regards to this process of achieving clarity, Lofland and Lofland (1995: 78) suggested that researchers ask themselves the question ‘what about this [interview] question is puzzling me?’ and taking this into consideration, I attempted to make the interview schedule relate directly to the thesis research questions but found I needed to break these research questions down into areas or topics that the interviewees were

likely to be able to consider and to which they could respond. The aim was to elicit narratives in the interviewees' own voices which could then be incorporated in the data analysis. As the data had been offered by these individuals the validity of their accounts was assured (Flick, 2009).

In so doing I attempted to consider the whole data collection process from the interviewees' perspectives as well as my own stance (A. Bryman & Teevan, 2004). Through asking these questions of myself, I decided to leave to one side my research assumption presuming that there might have been strong political efforts to bring gender issues into the political reform process on childcare policy. The main reason was that I had discovered that I would not be able to embrace other political settings, environments and backgrounds of the childcare policy reform if I only focused on my assumption of the importance of gender politics at that time. For example, the political concern regarding childcare in Korean politics may not have been only driven by gender perspectives, and, more likely it may have been linked with economic concerns. These drivers could have been the wish to activate the social care service sector by increasing the number of childcare facilities or perhaps the desire to support children's early education which would, in the long run, enhance the employment skills available in the economy. That is, it had become apparent that if I continued focusing on the research with a specific assumption that gender movements played a key role, any other political issue or instance that featured as the backdrop to accelerating policy reforms would, most likely, be overlooked.

The other main concern in constructing the semi-structured interview schedule was my awareness that each of the questions needed to be asked in a slightly different manner, depending on the orientation of each interviewee, their having represented different voices during the reform process. Therefore, as I was aware of their position regarding the reform, the questions needed to be open ended rather than closed and the interview guide was required to encourage the flow of the interview, which meant the semi-structured format was most appropriate (Berg, 2007). I also decided to probe issues with more detailed questions whenever the opportunity arose if a matter of interest was mentioned during the in-depth interviews. That is, although not on the interview schedule, in order to gain new information I asked spontaneous

questions whenever something that previously I had not been aware of was offered to me in the interviews.

Although qualitative research is predominantly inductive, it would be hard to specify a research focus if interviewers were not very much aware of the respondents' potential answers to interview probes (A. Bryman & Teevan, 2004). As explained previously, gender issues are generally hidden by mainstream political issues rather than talked about directly (See Chapter 2 section 2.2). This tendency can pose a challenge when attempting to interpret and analyse interview data from the focal optic adopted in this study, i.e. a gender perspective (see Chapter 4 section 4.1). Moreover, the aim of this qualitative research is to investigate to what extent gender politics in South Korea has influenced the socialisation of care. It is therefore worth firstly seeking out the main discourses around childcare policy in South Korea by putting gender issues to one side since I could run the risk of not seeing other political issues that could be underpinning the reform. For instance, there is no doubt that one of the driving factors for reforming childcare in South Korea was to respond to the crisis of the low fertility rate recorded at 1.08 which was the lowest in the world in 2003 (See Chapters 3 and 5). In light of this, my questioning was phrased so as to ask how gender issues were treated at that time in relation to the low fertility rate and to elicit the government's responses to this problem. Therefore, before constructing the semi-structured interview schedule, reviewing policy documents describing the historical context of Korean childcare policy was an important step to ensure that I was aware of the whole story of the childcare policy reform process.

One further point to bear in my mind was the time period addressed and the scope of this research which aims to compare the situation, pre and post reform, of public childcare. As explained in the previous chapter (Chapter 3), the reform of public childcare policy in South Korea was mainly acted on during the Roh government (2003-2007) and the political efforts made towards achieving the socialisation of care by this government were remarkable when compared to those of others (Baek, 2009; Baek et al., 2011; Y.-s. Kim, 2009). However, it seems this could not be continued when power was handed over to the Lee government (2007-2012), which was more focused on achieving economic growth (Chegal, 2008; J.-h. Kim, 2011). As

discussed earlier in Chapter 3 the main political ideology under the Roh government concerned social redistribution and human rights, whereas Lee's government focused on establishing economic growth. The debate remains, however, regarding whether there has been a significant change in the direction taken by childcare policy given the different administrations that were in power during the critical time period. Although this shift in policy focus and the transfer period from one administration to the other needs to be investigated more fully, the interest of this current study is the comparison between pre and post reforms undertaken by the Roh government. The policy transfer between Roh and Lee (subsequent administration) will be considered for further study following after this PhD work.

In recognition of the timing of the reform of public childcare, the interview schedule (See Table 4-1 below) was divided into five sections, starting with probes regarding the interviewee's personal details, for instance, current affiliation and job and what these had been during the era of the reform. The next part sought to examine the background to the reform by asking questions concerning which period the respondent thought was most significant and what their specific role had been at that time. Following this, the questioning enquired about the initiation processes, for example, what was the political motivation behind them? Then, respondents were asked to identify individuals and groups that were strongly involved and, what they aimed to achieve, how they defined public childcare, and whether they considered informal care acceptable, and so on. Information regarding institutional settings such as: finance, provision, service diversity, service regulation, service assessment and monitoring, choice and access was elicited in the next section, and, in the concluding part, interviewees were asked to give an evaluation of the reforms. They were asked to comment on how they thought the socialisation of care could be fully achieved in South Korea, and what they thought of the outcomes that have emerged, subsequent to the reform¹⁰.

¹⁰ See appendix for interview schedule.

Table 4-1 Outline of the areas covered in the interview schedule

Personal details
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ affiliation▪ their current role
Identification of the reform process
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ brief understanding of the reform process▪ their role during the time of reform
Initiation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ the initiative/political motivation▪ main concerns and issues considered▪ key policy actors involved
Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ finance and provision▪ service regulation and assessment▪ service diversity, choice and access
Evaluation of the reform and perspectives on the socialisation of care
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ key outcome▪ another change they wish to bring▪ the extent of the achievement of the socialisation of care

4.3.1.2 In-depth interviews

Finding participants for the in-depth interviews, scanning the relevant documentary evidence to understand the basic elements of the political discourse and recruiting suitable interviewees took more time than I expected. While I was in South Korea for the purposes of the fieldwork in autumn 2011, the Lee administration which had taken office in December 2009 was very much opposed to policies and ideas that had been associated with its predecessor, the Roh government (See Chapter 3). Due to this situation, it became apparent that civil servants who had worked under the previous government, were reluctant to revisit their prior experiences. Moreover, the incumbent administration had reorganized the bureaucracy. For example, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family which previously had overseen childcare policy no longer covered it because the Lee government had re-assigned it to the Ministry of Health and Welfare. To compound matters, when I approached the

Ministry of Health and Welfare to obtain some relevant documents relating to the previous government, I was told firmly that there was nothing left relating to the previous ministry. Similarly, when I contacted the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family to find out whether there were any remaining documents, I was given the brush off and told that they kept nothing about childcare policy since their ministry had not been working in the area of public childcare following the change of government.

This difficult situation led me to opt for purposive sampling which is a strategy often used to access groups of people for whom there is no readily available sampling frame (Berg, 2007; A. Bryman & Teevan, 2004). The justification for this being that there are relatively few informants who know and are willing to recall what was going on during the reform period, as demonstrated above by the civil servants' reluctance to reminisce about earlier times. In addition, as investigating political conflicts can prove to be a relatively sensitive topic for any potential interviewees, I started to recruit interviewees through getting in touch with some contacts from my previous government work experience project that was based in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. In turn, my contacts introduced me to several influential policy makers, who, although some of them did not take a gender sensitive or any particular perspective, provided me with information regarding the overall picture and chronology of the relevant policy changes. Moreover, within the limitations of purposeful sampling, I tried to include a diverse selection of interviewees who could express their own views. Regardless of whether or not they were interested in gender concerns, and whether they had or had not raised gender concerns in public during the reform era, I wanted to access key policy actors who had been deeply involved with the policy reform process. Moreover, when contacted, they were very willing to be interviewed for this study and to tell me what they achieved during the reforms. Further, I found their stance and views regarding the reform was particularly powerful concerning the policy changes (Kingdon, 1995) and when selecting interviewees, it was important to have a diverse selection of those who could express their own views on childcare policy reform regardless of whether they held a gender perspective or not. This purposeful selection of interviewees enabled me to embrace diverse narratives regarding the political motivation and

perspectives on childcare policy reform in South Korea. In addition to having the chance to gather these diverse interviews, I also was in the position of being able to collect as sources various policy documents from some of the respondents. I discuss this below in 4.2.1.3.

In Table 4-2 below, I present details regarding the sixteen interviewees with whom I held the in-depth interviews. In sum, each interviewee played an important role and was a key policy actor during the period of interest. Over time, many of them have held different positions within the policy making arena and hence, were deemed well equipped to provide insights regarding the focal interest, i.e. the reforms.

Table 4-2 Background information on the selected interviewees

Interviewees	Position and role	Main activities	Gender
1	Academic consultant / Political appointee	A chairperson in a presidential advisory body in the Blue House ¹	Female
2	Governmental researcher	A senior researcher on childcare and family in the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs	Female
3	Academic consultant / Professor	A main actor who worked on the revision of the Childcare Act in 2004 and a professor in a department of Social Welfare	Female
4	Women's group organisation leader	A secretary general in the Korean Women's Association United	Female
5	Parents' group organisation leader	A secretary general of the parental corporation association	Female
6	The first minister of the Ministry of Gender and Equality	Previously the representative of the Korean Women's Association United	Female
7	Senior civil servant	A head of department of childcare in the Ministry of Gender and Equality	Female
8	Governmental researcher	A senior researcher in the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education under the Prime	Female

		Minister	
9	Parliamentary member	The Director of the Bureau of Women in Democratic Party	Female
10	Academic consultant / NGO group leader / Professor	The leader on the issue of childcare in the Committee of Social Welfare in the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy	Male
11	Academic consultant / Political appointee	A public official in special services in social policy in the Blue House	Female
12	Senior civil servant	A leader of the planning team on childcare in the City Hall of Seoul	Female
13	Academic consultant / Professor	A professor in a department of Economics and currently the President of the Korean Association of Public Finance	Male
14	The second minister of the Ministry of Gender and Equality	Previously a professor in a department of Sociology and previously the director in the Korean Women's Development Institute	Female
15	Academic consultant / Professor	A professor in a department of Children and Family	Female
16	Governmental researcher	A senior researcher on childcare and family in the research department in the City Hall of Seoul	Female

Note: 1. The Blue House is the Korean presidential residence and is called 'Cheongwadae'

All the interviews were recorded using a digital audio-recording device and a Skype Recorder software program was used for those carried out online. The chief advantage of a digital recording is that the quality of recording is far superior to that of tape recording and it is also possible to enhance the sound so that background noises are filtered out (A. Bryman, 2004). I recorded all my interviews and then transcribed all of them myself. Whilst it was a rather time-consuming task, it offered great benefits in terms of bringing me closer to the data and allowing me to start to identify key themes. I tried to find the time to transcribe the recording as soon as I finished each interview so that I was able to recall my own feelings from the interview whilst replaying the dialogue, and also becoming more aware of

interviewees' emotional responses allowed me to pick up on some key words or expressions that I had previously missed during the actual interview.

By listening to what the key policy actors had to say in the interviews, it firstly enabled me to note not only their achievements but also to identify political tension and conflicts emerging between the different ideologies and policy directions, some of which appear not to have been published before now. For instance, one of the former parliamentary members related the story behind what happened in the National Assembly over the decision regarding whether to abolish the ceiling for childcare costs. She had been against this during the reform process and explained in the interview how she and her party made a deal to not pass the bill with their opposite party's leaders and lobbyist groups representing private childcare facilities. Another example was when some political appointees in the Blue House who had worked closely with the President gave me information about the personal orientation of President Roh (who passed away in 2009), regarding such matters as his philosophy on childcare care provision, gender and the socialisation of care. Overall, most of the interviewees were willing to talk about what they had achieved as well as what they did not achieve while they were fully engaged in the reform process. Most of the data I obtained in the in-depth interviews were greatly valued and this proved an effective way to gather personal and previously unpublished information around the political discussion process. Given these strong advantages of the in-depth interviews carried out for this research, I was able to gather robust data on the political conflicts and struggles encountered whilst bringing into place the policy changes in childcare provision.

However, despite successfully carrying out these interviews I failed to contact any representatives for the incorporated and individual private childcare sector. Considering the main subject my thesis was the socialisation of care, it may be that advocates of private provision did not want to be interviewed on this theme and past events had shown that these actors had very proactive in protecting their interests in the policy forming process. In spite of this, I wrote letters to private associations requesting an interview, but only gave scant details regarding the focus of my research. Subsequently, I emailed and rang several times but the representatives

replied that they needed to consult with their managers and despite waiting for a long time, I never heard back from these organisations. Given my previous experience working on governmental projects and having interviewed other key policy participations, I became increasingly aware that incorporated and individual private interest groups acted in unison and tended to be opposed to other policy actors, particularly with regard to promoting public childcare provision. Owing to this lack of access to respondents from incorporated and individual private childcare facilities, I resorted to using publicly disseminated seminar papers and minutes from public hearings that presented some of their points of view.

4.3.1.3 Policy documents

The second qualitative strategy employed was the collection of relevant policy documents which helped to probe the relevant political discourses and establish a fuller understanding of the contemporary policy environments. These policy documents can show how a policy problem was described, conceptualized and evaluated by the actors, regardless of whether or not these form an appropriate or correct summary of an issue (Freeman and Maybin 2011). The majority of the policy documents I employed in this current study were collected in South Korea when I was there for the purposes of carrying out the in-depth interviews. They can be classified according to where they were published. Official documents are firstly those that were produced by governmental organizations such as the: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society, the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education, the Korean Women's Development Institute and the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs. These governmental agencies and research institutes have been influential and often set the agenda and the policy direction regarding childcare matters. The other type of policy documents is those published by private organisations, for instance, associations of private owners of childcare facilities, non-governmental groups, such as the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy and the Korean Women's Association United, as well as records of public hearings and academic journals. These documents were useful for investigating the interests and views held by the private sector regarding the policy changes and reforms. In addition, these private policy documents included some academic journal articles

written by professors which helped to shed light on their academic stance and opinion concerning policy reform. It should be noted, however, that these privately published documents were only used to understand the various competing voices commenting on the policy direction rather than for factual relevance or objective views regarding policy change, owing to the problems of guaranteeing their authenticity and representativeness (Scott, 1990), which meant that they could only be treated as subjective pieces of evidence rather than objective accounts.

4.3.2 Data analysis

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed in Korean firstly and only translated into English after being subjected to analysis. As the original transcriptions contained the interviewees' views of the policy and their thoughts surrounding this, I was of the opinion that translating interview data into another language might bring changes in subtle meanings, particularly as exactly comparable vocabularies are not always available for different languages (Kim, 2005; Wu, 2007). That is, carrying out translation before analysing the data runs the risk of losing the original meaning since translation involves imposing the interpretations of the translator and/or the researcher, which impacts on the subsequent analysis of the data. Therefore, all transcribed interview data remained in Korean until relevant portions were selected for the writing up of the findings in this thesis.

The interview data were initially coded using the NVivo 10 software package, which helped me organize a mass of unwieldy and tangled data, with the first task being to sort and reduce the data to make them more manageable. In keeping with the NVivo 10 program, this stage involved generating a set of themes and concepts according to which the data were labelled, sorted and synthesized and initially the thematic indexing was based on the issues highlighted in the interview schedule, but these were gradually broadened to include more issues identified by the interviewees. The interviews were loosely structured but still allowed for the grouping of interviewees' answers to certain prompts as detailed in Table 4.1 above. The focus of these groupings was initially shaped by the analytical framework developed from the extant theoretical literature and presented in Chapter 2 (section 2.2). The three groups were: the main influencing factors on policy reform, the groups/individuals

who had been actively involved and lastly, the issues considered at the time of the reform and the policy responses to resolve those ‘problematic issues’. These groupings facilitated a better understanding of the overall political trajectory, as well as the recognition of specific policy problems and concerns.

Once this was achieved, I read and re-read the categorically organized parts of the transcripts many times, searching out the central story of the policy reform process. Out of this iterative examination, I identified the broad policy context and used as the initial headings for coding the following: the main external and internal factors which brought about the policy reform, policy actors, the policy problems considered and policy responses, all of which are described in Chapter 6. Once this initial analysis had been carried out I read and re-read the transcripts, and introduced the categories that I had developed in Chapter 2 (section 2.3) so that I could consider competing discourses around the three dimensions of affordability, adequacy and autonomy in providing childcare services, which are addressed in Chapter 7. From this process, I started to piece together other important elements emerging in the data, in particular those which had not been considered as part of the original coding. These were marginal factors in the policy reform and the problems that had been considered to a lesser degree than some others, as well as policy groups that were only slightly involved with the policy process. This whole process was repeated until the coding categories had been applied and examined for every interview.

The next step was to investigate each broad analytical category more closely to identify deeper meanings and their significance. This entailed a detailed examination of each extract, line by line, in conjunction with re-listening to the original interview recording. For deeper understanding three different types of search were carried out to seek associations, i.e. within each category, between categories and across different categories (Becker, 2004). This step was taken in order to find patterns of association within the data and to see why they were occurring. This process enabled me to move through the whole data set quite easily and essential patterns began to emerge from the transcripts. These entire processes of the analysis, however, were not linear. For this reason the coding categories were refined and re-clarified on several occasions, with the need to revisit constantly the original or synthesized data

to search for new clues and themes in order to check my assumptions or to identify underlying factors (Jane Ritchie & Jane Lewis, 2003).

Regarding using the policy documents, I had briefly read these in preparation for interviewing my informants. However, it was necessary to carry out a more rigorous analysis of the texts in order to be able to compare the documentary records with the outcomes of the in-depth interviews. When it came to the analysis, I was not able to use the NVivo 10 software package, even for coding the materials. The reason for this was firstly most of the policy documents I collected in South Korea were printed out and without electronic files and even some of electronic documents were not easy to input into the program due to the different language code. I tried to resolve this technological problem but I also found some of policy documents were too big to be put into the program so that the program crashed repeatedly. Because of these troubles, I gave up on using the NVivo program for coding them. Instead I processed the selected documents by hand, using coloured stickers and following the themes that emerged from the in-depth interviews. Moreover, by investigating these dimensions in the policy documents, I was able to identify the differences between those issues and policy concerns discussed initially during the pre-reform stages and the policy alternatives finally reached. As I progressed in this analysis I became more curious to discover why some issues apparently disappeared during the process and never appeared in the public arena. Overall, while analysing the data from the in-depth interviews and the policy documents, I had to be constantly referring to them both, in order to look at the documents and check the path of the reform process, as reflected in the interviewees' spoken words. By running these two methodological tools in parallel, I was more confident that my interview data was rooted in the historical and political context as set down in the documentary records (Berg, 2007; A. Bryman & Teevan, 2004).

4.3.3 Ethical issues and dilemmas that arose during the research process

Throughout the study it was essential to think through the ethical issues that may arise when undertaking research. This was particularly the case when conducting interviews with elite policy makers who had been influential in the policy reform process over the last ten years and who tended to have very strong opinions

regarding their actions during this time. Given this, several ethical issues surfaced during the process of carrying out the in-depth interviews. First, the in-depth interviews partly aimed to investigate political conflicts and barriers to introducing policy changes. For this reason, I found that some interviewees were sometimes reluctant to give a negative assessment of the policy reforms and some asked me to keep some of the interview confidential, which I did, so as not to cause any potential harm or discomfort to the participant. Most of the respondents still enjoyed a good reputation in their field and at the time of the fieldwork, were still deeply involved with governmental bodies. Therefore, I had to respect this and keep their names and positions anonymised so as to protect their confidentiality. In spite of this ethical obligation, there were some individuals for whom I could not fully protect their identity, although I tried. In the cases of two previous ministers in the Ministry of Gender and Equality, quoting their comments in the interviews could make identifying them very easy. Therefore, as part of the process of obtaining their fully informed consent to participating in my study, I had to give these two former ministers sufficient information concerning the research process and make it clear that I intended to quote from them in this thesis.

I explained details of this research and the research process to all interviewees in an appropriate way by giving them an information sheet that stated the research aims and objectives and the purpose of the study, what the study entailed, how the subjects would be expected to participate and what would be required of them. After fully informing the interviewees individually about the work in a comprehensive and coherent fashion, their consent to being interviewed was obtained by asking directly whether they agreed to participate. Subsequently, all procedural matters were clarified, including their time commitment and the locations for holding the interviews.

In addition, regarding the issue of respecting the participant's voice during the interviews, I occasionally wanted to clarify what had been said and so I checked back with the interviewee the meaning of his/her comments. Moreover, I had explained to each of them individually the nature of this study and ensured that they understood how their data would be used. They were informed that what they said in the

interviews would be recorded and then quoted in my research reports and any subsequent investigations. In addition, they were told that they did not need to respond to any questions that they did not wish to answer and that there was the opportunity to contact me at any time if they wanted to add something and (or) change any of their responses. Moreover, the participant's right to withdraw was explained both orally, before the interview was held, and in writing in the information sheet. I also noticed that some participants were a bit concerned about their responses to some of the questions, given the significant positions of responsibility they held in this field. I, therefore, had to remind them explicitly that they could answer just some of the questions and could stop the interview at any time.

Regarding de-briefing, on reflection it would have been desirable to return to the interviewees to give them some feedback on their interviews and the progress of the research. This would also have allowed me to gather some feedback from the policy actors themselves on the issues that had emerged during the course of the research and my interpretation of their comments. However, I became aware that it was not appropriate and in fact, impractical to carry out in this policy research, as many of the interviewees could not be expected to concur with my interpretations of the interview data and my perspective on the policy reform. Moreover, I wanted to remain independent and not to take on any other ideology or adopt an informant's assessment of the policy reform. Nevertheless, as explained above, I talked over some of the issues that I thought had arisen during the session with the respondent at the time of the interview. This helped me to clarify my thoughts and allowed the interviewee to engage with my understanding of what he/she had said by way of comment.

In conclusion, conducting in-depth interviews and carrying out analysis of policy documents generated deep and rich quality data. Using the in-depth interviews proved a rewarding and informative process, and once contact and access had been established, the participants were willing and receptive informants, with many expressing pride and pleasure that someone was interested in hearing and valuing their accounts of their roles over the policy reform process. Nevertheless, keeping gender perspectives in mind was challenging and called for reflection during the

interviews as the participants had not been recruited because they had a high degree of consciousness about gender issues in the context of care work or even with regard to gender sensitive decision making during the policy reforms within the government. It was entirely necessary to draw on policy documents as they enabled me to identify the differences between informal concerns and initial issues and policy debates discussed during the reform process and the policy options finally reached.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the methodological considerations that arise when conducting a mixed method study combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. For the quantitative approach, secondary data analysis was used in order to assess the change that could be observed regarding outcomes changes in the modes of public childcare services that occurred over time. This is termed the exploratory and initial stage of the methodology. Comparing the data, largely selected from the National Surveys on the Attitudes of Using Childcare Services, for the years 2002 and 2009 made it possible to ascertain whether there were any changes in institutional settings and to the actual conditions under which care was carried out and received over the time period. In-depth interviews and policy documents were employed in a qualitative phase to investigate the political conflicts and struggles encountered in bringing gender issues on to the agenda regarding the socialisation of care. This phase follows the first exploratory phase and is termed explanatory as it aims to shed light on why the situation after the reform appeared as it did. Issues debated during the reform process were often revealed in the form of informal power relations or personal emotional responses that went unpublished in policy reports or were not recorded in the minutes of formal meetings. Therefore, by looking at both the spoken words collected from the interviews and the policy documents, I was able to uncover some of these by referring to the documents and the interview outcomes in parallel. In addition, having both data resources, namely the in-depth interviews and the policy documents, has provided information that has previously not been considered with respect to the political discussions. Moreover this has facilitated the application of a gendered perspective to the analysis of the policy reform process.

Chapter 5: Empirical findings (part I)

Exploring the nature of pre and post reform childcare provision

The following three Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the empirical findings from this study. The first, Chapter 5, engages with the secondary data sets deployed during the quantitative, exploratory phase, while the next two, Chapters 6 and 7, address the data collected from the in-depth interviews and policy documents undertaken for the explanatory phase. To carry this out, the three indicators developed in Chapter 2 (Table 2-2) for analysing gender politics in advancing the socialisation of care, are adopted respectively in each empirical chapter.

This first empirical chapter aims to explore whether any changes in institutional settings and in the conditions for care practice, have occurred and the nature of any such developments. As outlined in Chapter 3, the reforms of childcare provision by the Roh government were in the context of the legacy of the previous administration under Kim Young-sam. This chapter presents empirical evidence looking at what transpired, outcomes for state based childcare provision from the evidence taken from large scale national surveys and census reports. In the following chapters I seek to explain the policy trajectory and critical departures that possibly help to shed light on the trends and emergent issues that can be found in the statistical data discussed below in this initial empirical review.

As mentioned earlier, in this study, the institutional setting refers to the nature of state based provision, while care practice concerns the conditions under which the care is carried out and received. By probing the nexus between the anticipated changes and the real impact on care practices (see Table 2-1 in Chapter 2), this chapter gauges whether the results from the implementation of the policy initiatives match up to actual care practice following policy interventions taken under the reform agenda. In order to do this, this chapter builds on the three dimensions of affordability, adequacy and autonomy, which were displayed in Table 2-2 in Chapter 2: the exploration of the secondary data sets is conducted based on these key elements. This chapter therefore aims to explore whether there have been any changes at the point when the childcare services are finally delivered in institutional settings and the actual conditions between pre and post reform situations.

To undertake the investigation of these two matters and examine the nature of changes regarding both, an assessment is made through analysis of large scale surveys and related statistical data sets including: the ‘National Survey on the Attitudes of Using Childcare Services’, conducted in 2002 and 2009 and ‘Statistics on childcare’ published every year from 2002 to 2009. Information on the nature of these surveys (e.g. survey size, sampling and contents) has been detailed in Chapter 4 above, with an overview of the limitations of these sources. As a supplementary source, ‘A guide to childcare’, put out each year, which contains the guidance on the childcare services and information of the service operations for the owners and for parents will also be deployed in this chapter regarding service content. Overall, through undertaking a comparison between pre and post reform situations, the aim is to shed light on whether the political interventions have been sufficient to conclude that the socialisation of care has gone forward in South Korea.

It may be the case that, even more than was apparent in the extant qualitative academic research, gender issues arising from the dimensions of affordability, adequacy and autonomy have been ignored in quantitative surveys. Therefore, the opportunity to discuss the findings emerging from quantitative research may present a number of challenges, even though this remains a goal for this current thesis. More specifically, in spite of the acknowledgement that reliance on informal childcare still exists to a large extent, even alongside the use of formal care services (Baek, 2009, 2011; Ma, 2005; Peng, 2009; Won & Pascall, 2004), the gender relations centring on caring work in the home have rarely been raised within quantitative data sets. Recently, as issues relating to informal care have moved to be centre stage, particularly in the last ten years, Statistics Korea¹¹ has carried out a survey of this informal caring work and published data sets (Statistics Korea, 1999, 2004, 2008, 2009). Nevertheless, there is still a dearth of survey data that explores the dynamics of gender relations in this context. Large scale data sources still fail to probe complex

¹¹ The office Statistics Korea states their purpose and the role on their own webpage like this: “As a central governmental organisation for statistics, the Statistics Korea aims at promoting services of overall planning and coordination of national statistics, establishment of statistical standards, production & distribution of various economic and social statistics, processing & management of statistical information and provision of various statistical data.” (Available from <http://kostat.go.kr/portal/english/aboutUs/2/1/index.static> [Accessed 6 September 2013].

issues such as the mechanisms underlying decision-making by working mothers regarding whether to purchase childcare services or to care for their children by themselves.

Given these limitations of the quantitative data sets that can be employed in this research, in this chapter the aim is to present the data on outcomes between pre and post reforms. By dividing the discussion into two, the institutional settings and care practice, any gaps between these two levels, which the policy reforms may not have been able to resolve, will become clear.

5.1 Changed outcomes in institutional settings

The changed outcomes in institutional settings are assessed in this section in order to evaluate whether the goal of socialisation of care has been gone forward, which was established as the intention of policy changes in Chapter 3 (see sections 3.2.3 and 3.3). The aims are to compare the policy circumstances in the provision of childcare services between pre and post reforms, especially focusing on two points in time, 2002 and 2009. The early 2000s was regarded as critical time when political concerns in relation to the crisis in caring grew and debates increased regarding the actual reformation of social care services socialising caring. This time was also critical in terms of gender politics being activated by the gender mainstreaming movement which, as mentioned in Chapter 3 was attempting to place gender issues at the heart of policy-making bodies and other institutions' activities. Moreover, considering the availability of longitudinal data sets, the 'National Survey on the Attitudes of Using Childcare Services', which reported on surveys conducted in 2002 and 2009 (Seo et al., 2009; Seo et al., 2002; Yoo et al., 2009)¹², it was possible to compare changes in employing childcare services on a longitudinal basis for this time period and to critically evaluate the limitations of the policy changes. The discussion of the data is structured according to the three dimensions of affordability, adequacy, and autonomy.

¹² The surveys in 2009 were separately published: Seo et al. (2009) was surveyed on households and Yoo et al. (2009) was surveyed on childcare centres.

Affordability and economic resources: This dimension focuses on the financial structures and the structures of care provision in institutional settings. For example, regarding financial resources, the extent of any changes in government budgets is considered because it enables us to see whether the government's financial portion of the childcare cost has changed. Further, a number of questions can be raised in relation to this dimension, such as: whether the financial breakdown of costs for childcare between the state and family has changed and who mainly supports these costs. Regarding structures for providing the services it is necessary to enquire who is eligible for purchasing them: low income families, working parents, or single parents and so on. Moreover, under this heading changes to mothers' working conditions in the labour market, related to opportunity cost between work and care and how work spaces have been modified to accommodate childcare services are considered. As discussed in Chapter 2 (see section 2.3.1), financial issues, especially related to mothers' working conditions in the labour market, can be a determining factor in enabling parents to employ the services, especially lone mothers, who have difficulty entering labour markets due to care needs.

Adequacy and service quality: This dimension addresses the infrastructure put in place to improve service quality. Having acknowledged that the main issue during the debate further discussed in chapter 6 section 6.2 concerned the gap in service quality between the public and private childcare centres, there is an attempt to compare service quality between these two types of facilities, pre and post reforms. Three indicators are adopted to compare this infrastructure: the number of children per teacher by the type of facility; working hours of care workers; and the gap between care workers' salaries between the two types of facility. A reason for choosing care workers' conditions as indicators is that poor working conditions has been regarded as one of the factors leading to poor quality of childcare services (Hofferth and Wissoker, 1992; Phillips, 1987; Ruopp et al., 1979). Moreover, in practical terms these indicators are available in the national surveys that I have employed.

Autonomy and service availability: The impact of service availability on parents, take up of formal childcare services is the matter under consideration in this dimension. As it is difficult to gauge subjective feelings regarding the extent to

which parents are autonomous in employing childcare services, here autonomy is taken to refer to the time children spend in care with the concern being that many women need more flexible care services at night or even weekends covering their working hours. Owing to the characteristics of their jobs, they often have unsocial hours (see the section 2.3.3 in Chapter 2). To investigate this, the national surveys are probed to establish how many parents employ extra programmes, for example, time extended childcare, night-care and 24 hour care and holiday care programmes, in addition to care taken up during the regular opening times of childcare facilities. More specifically, parental demand for these extra childcare programmes is analysed according to: the age of the child, geographical region and mothers' employment status. However, the issue of access in terms of location and information previously addressed as falling under the dimension of autonomy, is not available for analysis in the national surveys.

5.1.1 Affordability and economic resources

Affordability in using childcare services has been defined as how to afford the economic resources of care which parents can envisage purchasing in care markets. That is, the main concern is how to alleviate the financial burden of childcare costs. To this end, two features are investigated in relation to the care market: changes in the structure of financing and changes in the structure of provision. Moreover, the situation in the labour market regarding mothers is considered to see whether there have been any developments regarding their working situation and whether support from the workplace for their caring work has changed.

The government budget for childcare services has increased dramatically during the reform period. As shown in Table 5-1 below, the total budget, including central and local sums, has risen more than eight fold during this period and in terms of direct support for childcare costs, the allocation has increased more than twelve fold during the same period. With respect to the distribution of childcare costs between the state and the family, the average proportion met by parents was almost 70% in 2002 (Seo et al., 2002), whereas by 2009 it had fallen to about 64% (Seo et al., 2009). However, it should be noted here that these two data sets are not strictly comparable as the 2009 data was derived only from users of private childcare centres, while the 2002

position refers to all types of service users. With regards to Figure 5-1, accepting that the financial contribution made by private users has been relatively higher than that from those using public services, this comparison of payments apparently indicates that parents' financial expenditure on childcare has been reduced during this period from 2006 to 2009. Furthermore, with the application of the basic subsidy¹³ to payments given towards meeting the costs for infants (0 to 2 years old children), parents' payments for childcare costs are seen to have declined between 2006 and 2009 (Figure 5-1). As this is the case, below will show whether the extent to which parents experienced financial pressures when they paid fees has also decreased.

Table 5-1 The governmental budget (central and local) spent on childcare in 2002 and 2009

Unit: million won

	2002	2009
Support for operation and maintenance of facilities ¹	221,668	785,584
Support for childcare costs ²	208,144	2,669,242
Reinforcement function of care facilities	5,175	41,978
Other ³	1,916	76,807
Total	436,903	3,573,811

Note:

1. This contains the support for personnel expenses, transportation, teaching materials, and aids and so on.
2. This includes the costs of graded subsidy, free childcare for 5-year-old children, and the support for disabled children
3. This refers to instalment of infrastructure, assessment of the service facilities, and support for the children who do not use the service.
4. Data from the two sources for the two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.72); Seo et al., (2002, p.91)

¹³ The basic subsidy was extended during the reform process from only covering public provision to include a certain portion of the total cost for young children attending private childcare facilities. It is discussed in detail in chapters 6 and 7.

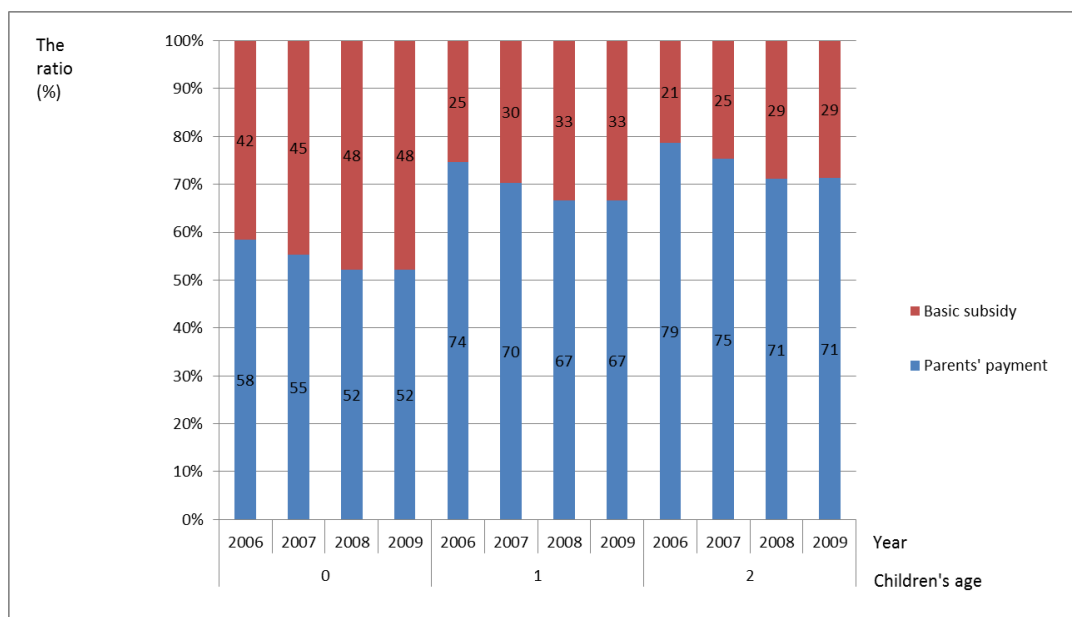


Figure 5-1 The composition of childcare costs in the private sector from 2006 to 2009, by age of child

Note: Data from the sources for each year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.65)

According to the information in Figure 5-2 below, the proportion of children with exemptions and reductions in their childcare costs in 2008 was 64.3%, and this shows more than a threefold increase when compared to the 2002 percentage of 19.4% (Seo et al., 2009; Seo et al., 2002). For 2008, similarly from Figure 5-1 it can be seen that the proportion of low-income families supported through the graded subsidy increased progressively over all the age ranges between 2006 and 2008, except for those children aged five. One reason for the contrasting movement seen for this particular age group could be the dual edu-care system for children in South Korea, which offers childcare for 0 to 5 year olds and kindergarten education for 5 to 7 year olds. This means that children aged five go either to a kindergarten or to a nursery and thus it is difficult to follow the exact number of five year olds there are across each part of the system as a whole. Nevertheless, a fact that clearly emerges from the data is that the proportion of children from lower income families being supported by the graded subsidy increased between 2006 and 2008, following its expansion in 2006.

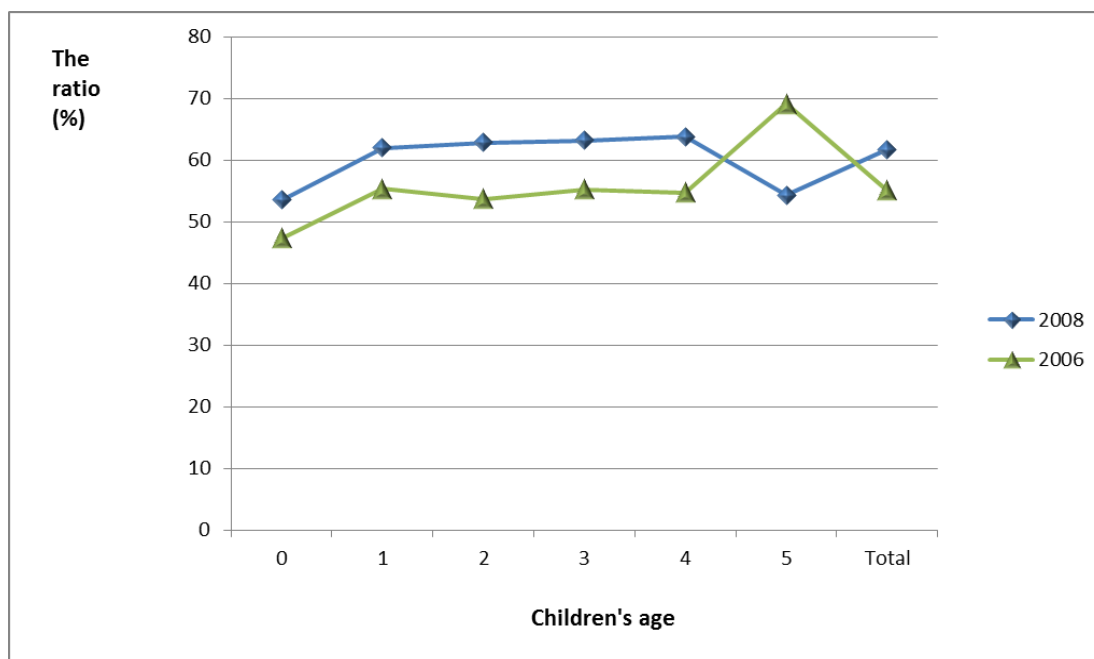


Figure 5-2 The proportion of low income families' children covered by the graded subsidy, for 2006 and 2008

Note: Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.69)

However, these extensions of government subsidies also led to a higher proportion of private sector facilities, which was the opposite approach to the original one of increasing the number of publicly provided and funded childcare facilities (See Chapter 6). As described in previous Chapter 3, there are seven types of childcare centre in South Korea by the type of ownership; national/public, legal corporation, incorporated organizations, centre based individual, home based individual, parental corporation and workplace. Whereas the first two types of childcare facilities (national/public and legal corporations) are categorized as publicly funded childcare centres operated by the state or local government or alternatively social welfare corporations, the rest of these facilities are classified as private childcare centres which pursue the making of profits. That is, as will be further discussed in Chapter 7, it appears that the government could not avoid utilising private sector providers. Indeed, Figure 5-3 shows that the incorporated organizations and centre based individuals as well as home-based facilities, which are the types of provision run to make profits, increased remarkably compared to the other forms of ownership. In

particular, this could be linked to the basic subsidy for infants, since the scheme of basic subsidies given to the private childcare centres has allowed them to belong to the public childcare system together with the publicly provided and funded childcare centres. Hence, it may be assumed that the introduction of the basic subsidy is one reason driving the number of home-based facilities up to a higher level during this period, which will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

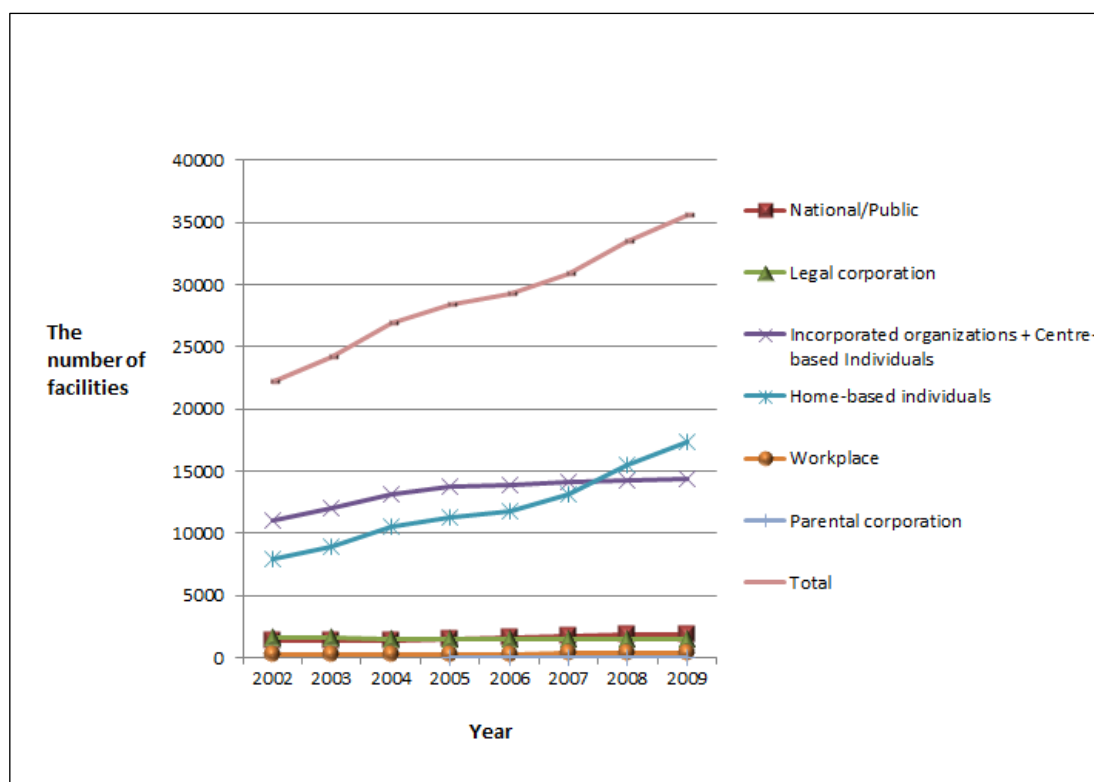


Figure 5-3 The trend of increased number of childcare facilities by the type of ownership, from 2002 to 2009

Note:

1. Parental corporation was not categorized until 2004 and its institutionalization took place in 2005.
2. Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: MHW, Childcare Statistics (2011)

The data presented in Figure 5-4 confirms this expansion of private provision and shows that the number of enrolled children in the centre-based facilities and the home-based childcare centres has also gradually increased, in particular, in the latter case nearly doubling between 2002 and 2009. The number of enrolled children in the publicly funded and provided centres, i.e. the national/public and legal corporations,

remained constant during this period but that for the private centres increased remarkably between 2002 and 2009. In spite of the considerable rise in the government budget spent on childcare, it is clear that the market in care provision has been enhanced by the way the private sector came to receive government subsidies (See Chapter 7 sections 7.1.2 and 7.2.2). That is, given the pre-existing high proportion of this sector in the care provision, it was probably unavoidable that they took an even greater share as they reinvested these subsidies in more provision and this trend in the data will be illuminated in the narratives in Chapter 7. Ungerson (2000) articulated the concern about the split between a purchaser and provider within a growing marketisation and privatisation of care provision, because in these circumstances, regulating the service quality in the care market becomes difficult to control by public intervention. Rather, according to the principal of a liberal market economy, the service quality in care markets should be better than the service in public operations by opening up the competition in the market. However, in contrast to this point of view, care should be understood as a public good rather than being a private good. Nevertheless, any diagnosis about care provision in the South Korean context has to take into account the private sector facilities in the care market, because of their forming a high proportion of provision.

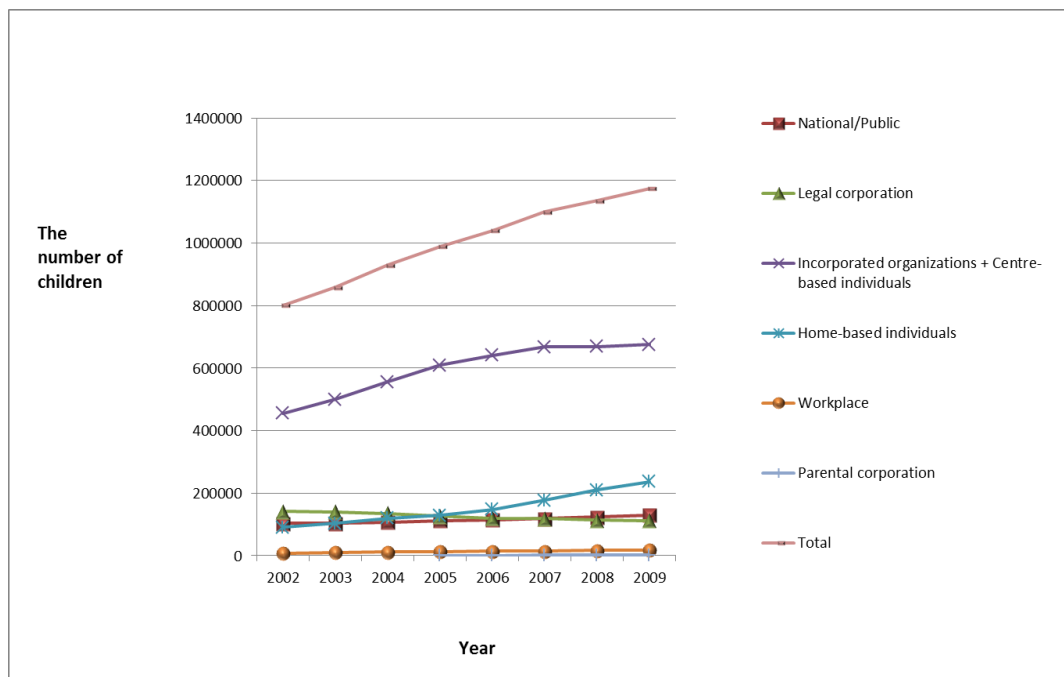


Figure 5-4 The trend of increased number of enrolled children by the type of ownership of the childcare facility, 2002-2009

Note: Data from the sources for each year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.
Source: MHW, Childcare Statistics (2011)

Having outlined some of the changes in the financial structures and provision of services, our attention turns to the issue of mothers' working conditions in labour markets. Surveys of attitudes among those using childcare services in 2002 and 2009 outlined the general characteristics of mothers caring for children and focussed on those mothers who were taking care of children, i.e. were carers, at the same time as they were employed in the labour market. By comparing any changes in purchasing childcare services in the market and caring for young children at home between 2002 and 2009, this researcher collated evidence of shifts in their employment and work life balance between these years. The discussion in this section does not seek to explain any direct relation between the reform of childcare policy and any outcome changes in the mothers' working conditions for the years of interest. Rather, the aim is to probe the mothers' working status regarding their use of childcare services and to examine any changes in their working lives that came about by employing them. The contention here is that married women with children are likely to face difficulty when entering the paid job market. More specifically, the burdens of caring work and childcare costs have been identified previously as influencing their decisions of whether to participate in the labour market (Budig & England, 2001; Chizuko & Katharine, 2006; Connelly, 1992; H Joshi et al., 1999).

Figure 5-5 below indicates that more than 60% of mothers remained as home-makers for the years 2002 and 2009 according to the information taken from the governmental surveys. Notwithstanding, the number of mothers who worked as regular employees slightly increased during the time period from 14% to 19%. Moreover, referring to Figure 5-6 below, among these working mothers, the data reveals that the overall employment rate for mothers has been increasing over the time period. The rate of participation for mothers of infants aged 0 to 2 years old has remained lower than that for mothers with 3 to 5 year old children. The latter increased moderately from 38% to 39% during the time and the former increased moderately from 24% to 29%. However, by looking at the rate of mothers who used childcare services and at the same time participated in the labour market, as shown in Table 5-2, it emerges that considerable changes have occurred over the years. In

particular, the percentage of employed mothers who used the services went up from 35% to 51%. The rate of unemployed mothers with 0 to 2 year old children also increased more than five times between 2002 and 2009 from which it can be inferred that the demand for childcare for infants increased substantially during the period for both employed and unemployed mothers. Notably, the percentage of unemployed mothers with 0 to 2 year old children and 3 to 5 year old children has been risen more than five times and twice, respectively, during the focal time period.

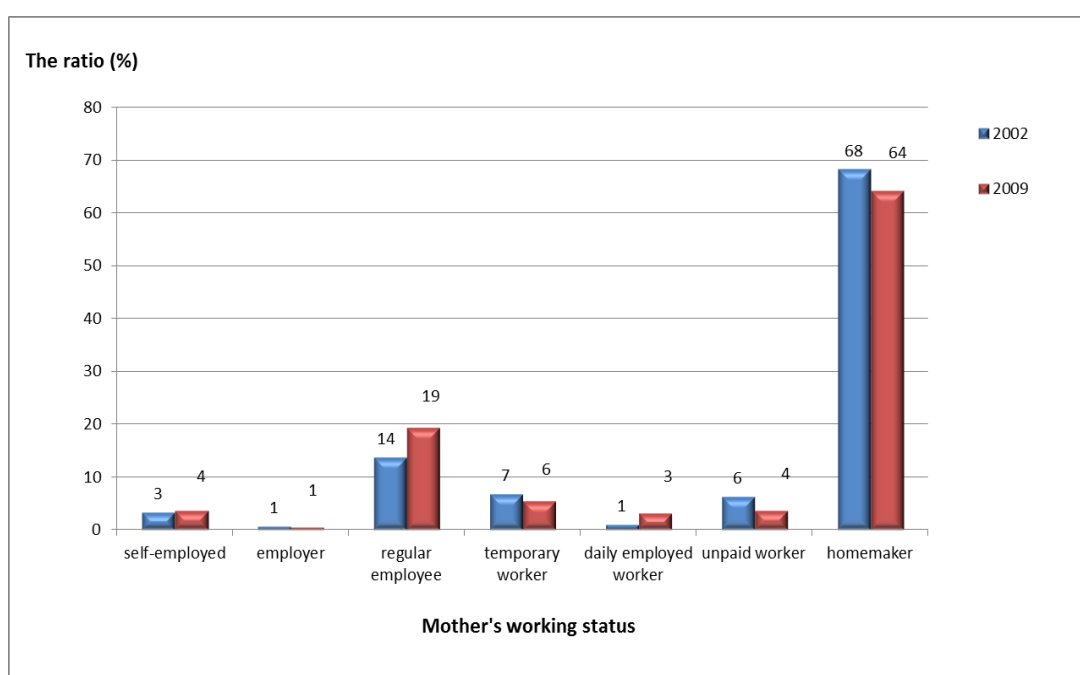


Figure 5-5 Mothers' working status in the labour market, for the years 2002 and 2009

Note:

1. The information was calculated using the data sets MHW (2002: 119) and MHWF (2009: 93)
2. Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002): Seo et al., (2009)

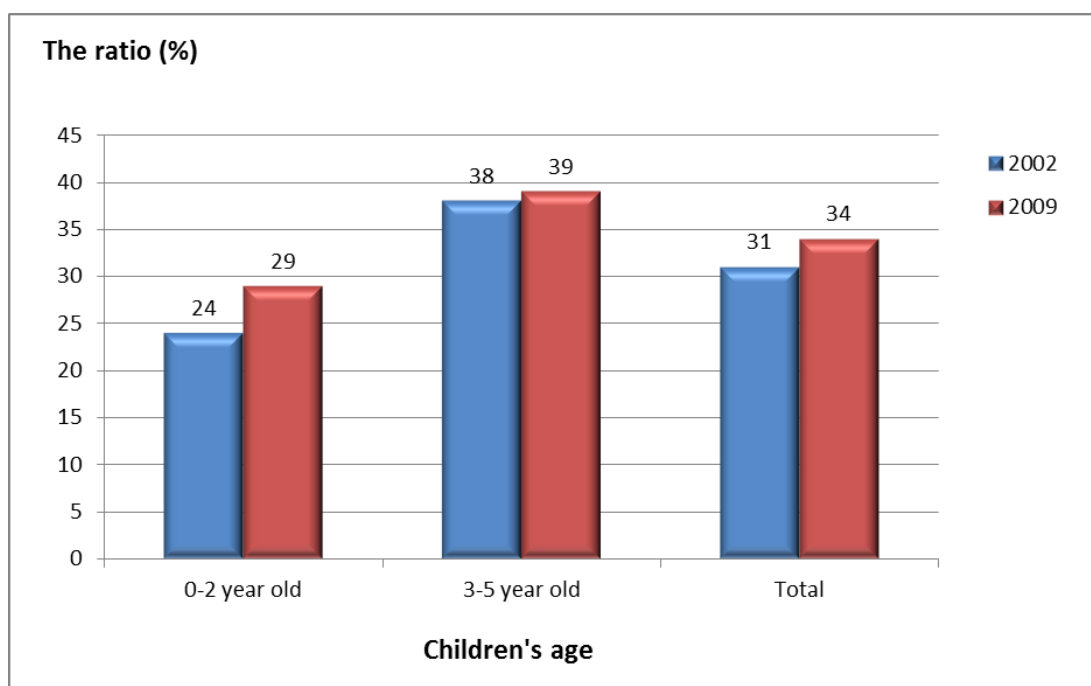


Figure 5-6 The rate of mothers' employment rates according to their children's age grouping, for 2002 and 2009

Note:

1. 'Total' shows the rate of mothers' employment rates over the all age group of children from 0 to 5 year old children
2. Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009: p.90)

Table 5-2 The rate of childcare service use according mothers' employment status, 2002 and 2009

Unit: %

	0-2 year old		3-5 year old		Total	
	Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed
2002	30	4	39	25	35	15
2009	51	23	51	48	51	36
Total	41	14	45	37	43	26

Note: Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002, p.132); Seo et al., (2009, p.115)

The issue of working parents using workplace childcare centres is addressed next. Figure 5-7 shows that the number of workplace childcare centres between 2002 and 2009 increased incrementally. However, the ratio of workplace centres to the total number of facilities still remained at only approximately 1%. The number of children enrolled in the workplace centres has increased only 0.4%, whilst the real usage rate decreased by 5%. In terms of the number of staff in the workplace centres, this number has increased from 1.2% to 1.7% during the time period 2003-2009 and the number of children per teacher has decreased from 8 to 5.2 (MHW, Statistics on Childcare, 2003, 2009¹⁴). This information regarding the fewer number of children that may be allocated to a member of staff might indicate that the circumstances for caring may have improved in workplace centres. However, overall it is still apparent that workplace centres play a minor role in Korean care markets, and it could be argued that to improve this, entrepreneurs and business leaders need to be encouraged actively to extend their participation in sharing the responsibility for caring work between the state, family and society.

¹⁴ There is no data available for 2002.

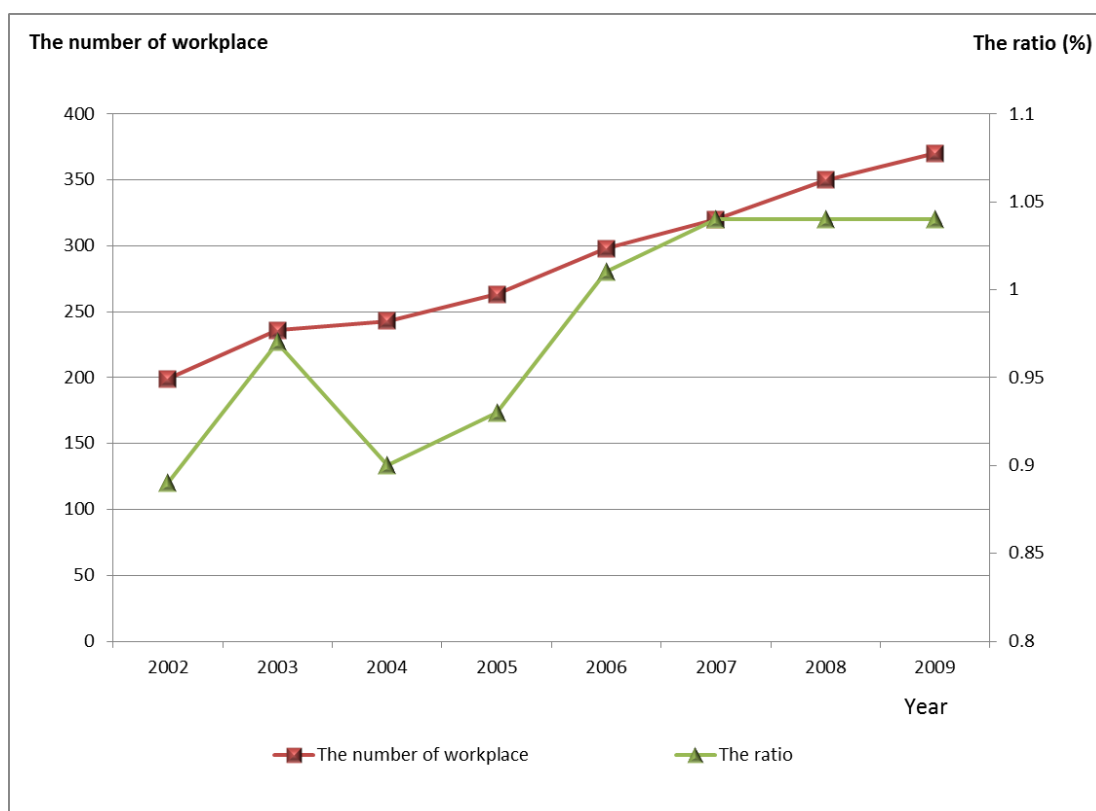


Figure 5-7 The number of workplace childcare centres and the ratio of these to the total number of childcare centres, from 2002 to 2009

Note: Data from the sources for each year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: MHW, 2011, Childcare Statistics.

In sum, regarding affordability and economic resources concerning purchasing childcare services, it cannot be denied that government expenditure on childcare services has increased greatly during the period from 2002 to 2009. The increase in state budget may be regarded as a government intervention to share the financial responsibility for caring between the state and the family and, in some instances, it may have made it more affordable for some parents to employ childcare services. Further, it should be noted that with respect to the structure of provision, the number of private childcare centres has increased remarkably, whilst the number of publicly funded and provided ones has remained almost constant. This rise in the number of private sector providers, in itself, may not be of concern and in past times, as noted in chapter 3, the role and capacity of private sector providers were taken for granted as

being features of the care markets. However, certain scholars, for instance, Land and Himmelweit (2010) and Brennan and her colleagues (2012), and in the Korean context, Song (2011), have pointed out that problems may occur with the growth of the private sector in the market for care. More specifically, these authors claimed that market provision is not underpinned, as with private goods, with the intention of the full declaration of service quality or features such as transparent competition pricing and hence it results in an asymmetry between the provider and consumer, which is not present in commodities markets.

5.1.2 Adequacy and service quality

The notion of adequacy refers in this study to the extent to which childcare provision meets parental needs and expectations regarding quality. Service quality is explored across three indicators deployed to assess provision: the number of children per teacher/care worker by the type of facility; working hours of care workers; and the differences in care workers' salaries between types of facilities. Although for parents the child-staff ratio may not be an important concern when deciding to select a particular service, amongst academics this has been considered as one of the most readily gauged indicators as a control for service quality (Morgan, 1987; Ruopp & Irwin, 1979 cited by Hofferth and Wissoker 1990). Also, having acknowledged that the main issue during the debate (which will be further discussed in Chapter 7 section 7.2) was concerning the gap in service quality between the public and private childcare centres, this section compares service quality between these two types of facilities over the time period, pre and post the reforms. By undertaking comparison of these three indicators across the public and the private facilities, the intention is to see whether there have been any changes in quality, for better or worse, over time.

Below, in Table 5-3 it can be seen that the number of children per care worker has decreased over time between 2003 and 2009 in public and private facilities. Further, in public childcare centres the figure has fallen from 8.8 to 6.7 children per teacher, giving a reduction of 2.1 per worker. Likewise, in the private childcare centres this has gone down from 9.3 to 6.6 children, which shows a greater reduction than that found in the public sector centres. When the number of children per care worker is used as an indicator of quality, these outcomes indicate that there has been a positive

change to improve service quality overall but that the private childcare centres have seen a more substantial improvement.

Table 5-3 The number of children per care worker by facility type, for 2003 and 2009

Unit: number

		2003	2009
Public	Total	8.8	6.7
	National /Public	9.5	6.7
	Legal corporation	8.1	6.6
Private	Total	9.3	6.6
	Incorporated organizations	9.4	6.6
	Centre-based individuals	9.2	6.5
Workplace		8.3	5.2
Home-based individuals		5.8	3.8
Parental corporation		-	4.8
Total		9.5	5.7

Note:

1. There is no data available for 2002.
2. Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: MHW, 2003 and 2009, Statistics on Childcare.

Next the working conditions of the staff in childcare centres are addressed by, firstly, comparing working hours and salaries for the different types of facilities during the period. Information regarding staff working hours in the various types of facilities for the years 2002 and 2009 is presented in Figure 5-8. According to this, it appears that there were no considerable differences regarding working hours between the public and private childcare centres and that in fact, the number of hours worked was reduced in all types of facilities, with the total hours having been reduced for both to approximately 9.5 hours per day and per person during this period. Turning to geographical differences, the data in Figure 5-9 captures the working hours of care staff by region. It is apparent from this that the working hours of those located in

local small cities underwent considerable change in that in 2002 their hours were longer than those in all other regions but by 2009 had come in line with the hours worked by staff located in the other regions. The poor working conditions of staff in these areas were regarded as one of the reasons for the low service quality experienced in those facilities as compared to that seen in big city based facilities (Brennan et al., 2012; J.-h. Kim, 2003). Through these improvements at the level of small cities it may be inferred that the quality gap between some regions has been narrowed.

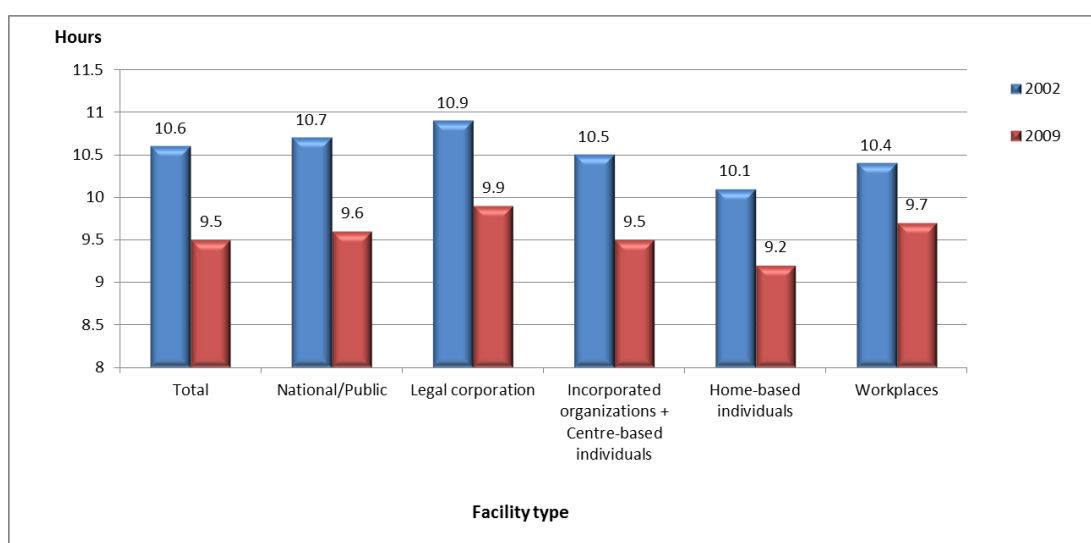


Figure 5-8 Work hours of care staff per day by facility type, for 2002 and 2009

Note:

1. For the comparison between 2002 and 2009, the parental corporation in 2009 is added to the category of 'Incorporated organizations + Centre-based individuals'.
2. Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002, p.295); Yoo et al., (2009, p.189)

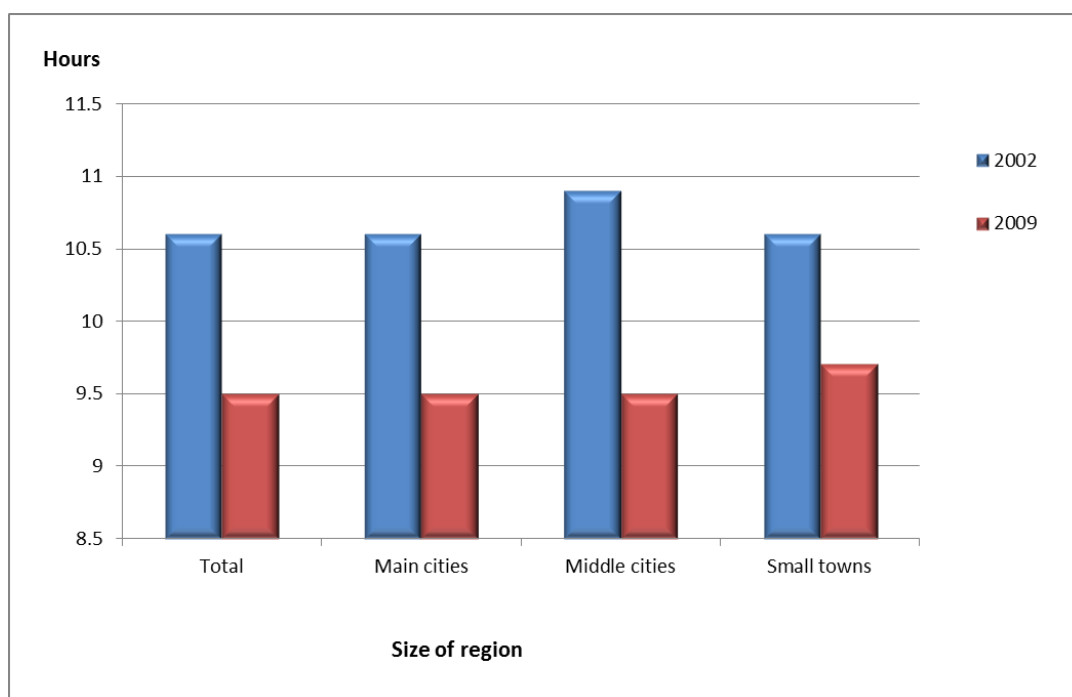


Figure 5-9 Work hours of care staff per day by region, for 2002 and 2009

Note:

1. There are several indicators to divide the size of region, for example the size of population, population density and so on. These surveys do not give a clear idea about this but generally in South Korea main cities have more than million inhabitants and middle cities have more than 50 thousand.
2. Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002, p.295); Seo et al., (2009, p.326)

The next issue to be discussed is the payment of care workers across the various types of facilities. Ungerson (2000) tackled the particular impact of the marketisation and privatization of care provision, especially in paid care work, which seeks cheap but at the same time, exhaustive service delivery, and should be illuminated by gender perspectives. The low waged employed situation could be a disadvantage for paid care workers when it comes to the accumulation of social security rights in their old ages. In the context of Korean care provision, the low wages of employees, especially in private childcare centres have been regarded as one of the main factors causing low quality of service (Hwang, 2005; J.-h. Kim, 2003). In this respect, the situation in the public childcare centres has been described as being not as poor. Figure 5-10 shows the differences in wages among the types of facilities for 2002,

2004 and 2009. While the wages of care workers in the public childcare centres increased by KRW 1,530,000, those in private childcare centres increased by KRW 1,140,000 during the period. These differences in salary increases resulted in a gap of KRW 450,000 between public and private childcare centres in 2009, whereas it was KRW 90,000 of the salary gap in 2002. Therefore, the salary disparity between employees in the public and private centres appears to have remained great. This imbalance regarding care workers' wages between the public and private facilities contrasts with reductions in the numbers of children per teacher/care worker and working hours in the facilities. Although there is no evidence to conclude that a higher salary for care workers results in a higher quality of service, the common argument about this in South Korea has agreed that low wages of care workers in the private sector was regarded as one of the main reasons for the low quality of the service (Baek & Seo, 2004; J.-h. Kim, 2004; J.-j. Kim, 2009).

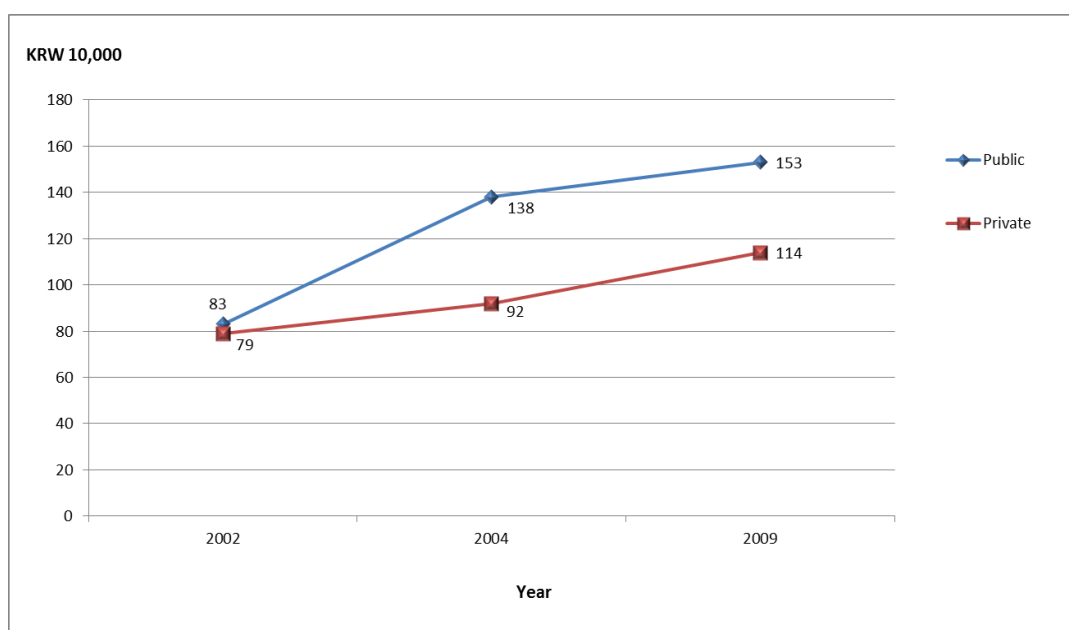


Figure 5-10 Changes in care workers' salary payments

Note:

1. The type 'Home-based individual' is included in the private figures and 'workplace facilities' are excluded from this data.
2. Data from the sources for each year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002); Seo et al., (2009)

To sum up, with regard to assessing service quality, it is difficult to find specific measurements for gauging whether these have been adequate and/or appropriate in the context of institutional settings. Above, the working conditions of care workers in public childcare centres and private ones have been investigated by drawing on three indicators. The working hours of staff and the number of children for which they have responsibility are factors that could influence service quality and these have undergone improvements over time. Nevertheless, the gap in salary between staff in these two types of facilities has become even larger and the relatively lower levels of wages in the private childcare centres have been identified as contributing to poor service quality (J.-j. Kim, 2009). It remains to say that to improve service quality, improved working conditions for care workers should be guaranteed.

5.1.3 Autonomy and service availability

The dimension of autonomy in this research is defined as the availability of childcare services in the care market accessible without any constraints. This notion is in keeping with the works of Kreyenfeld and Hank (2000) and Song (2009) which have highlighted the issue of the availability of care provision and the impact of having access to day care arrangements on mothers' employment status. More specifically, these scholars argued that having more flexible and more extensive (full-time) day care services for children of all ages was necessary if mothers were to be guaranteed access and later in Chapter 7, the discussion about giving diverse choices to mothers arising from debates during the policy reform process in South Korea is set out. A picture of the degree of autonomy experienced in selecting and accessing childcare services could potentially be achieved through a number of measures, for example, by taking into account parental access to information about curriculum and the nature of a particular centre or by considering the distance between the family home and a facility. However, the factor of time, in terms of flexibility of care, is deemed to be an appropriate measure in this study, owing to the limited data available for analysis in this study.

Table 5-4 shows the percentage of parents using different forms of extra childcare, i.e. extended hours, night time and 24 hour care and holiday programmes as well as the real usage rate in 2009. The information regarding the demand and the real usage

rate of available services is presented according to whether mothers were employed or unemployed, age of child and where they lived, to assess whether the former, i.e. employed mothers have more limited access to such information than the latter, i.e. unemployed ones. Overall, the use of extra childcare programmes was slightly higher amongst employed mothers. From this data an impression may be gained that there is little desire amongst mothers to take advantage of these forms of care so, to clarify this, the nature of the demand for extra childcare needs to be probed. The table also shows that parents who had infants (aged from 0 to 2 years old) expressed higher demand than parents of 3 to 5 year old children. Further analysis indicates that demand for time extended, night and 24 hour care programmes is higher than that for holiday care programmes. It also reveals that mothers tend to need more flexible day care services rather than long term care services. Moreover, demand for time extended care programmes among unemployed mothers is relatively higher than the need among employed mothers. The evidence also shows, counter intuitively, that time extended care programmes are not only important to working mothers. Quick perusal of Table 5-4 reveals that there are still large gaps between actual consumption and demand.

Table 5-4 The percentage of the demand for extra childcare programmes and the percentage of extra childcare programme usage in 2009

Unit : %

	Time extended care programme		Night-care and 24 hour- care programme		Holiday care programme ¹	
	Demand	Real usage rate	Demand	Real usage rate	Demand	Real usage rate
<i>Mothers' employment</i>						
Employed	43	3.1	52	0.2	24	0.3
Unemployed	53	0.3	37	0.0	20	0.1
<i>Age of child²</i>						
0-2	56	-	45	-	23	-
3-5	42	-	40	-	19	-

<i>Region</i>						
Main cities	49	1.4	43	0.2	22	0.1
Small cities	48	1.8	45	0.0	20	0.3
Towns	54	0.2	36	0.0	20	0.0
Total	49	3.4	42	0.2	21	0.4

Note:

1. Holiday care programme is the day care service for the parents who use it on Sundays or national holidays.
2. There is no data available for this.
3. Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009: 230); Yoo et al., (2009, p.421-423)

5.1.4 Summary

This section has sought to assess the changed outcome in the institutional setting in terms of the dimensions of: affordability and economic resources, adequacy and service quality, and autonomy and service availability. To round off this discussion a brief overview of each is presented.

Affordability and economic resources: Regarding this dimension, substantial changes occurred in terms of increased government expenditure on childcare provision. This institutional change potentially sets down a platform for recognising the state's financial responsibility for caring for children as a care provider. Nonetheless, it has emerged that this government intervention has led to the growth of the private sector, continuing the extant arrangement with provision being dominated by private childcare centres to a large extent. Moreover, workplace childcare centres as an option for working parents still only have a minor role in shouldering responsibility for childcare.

Adequacy and service quality: By undertaking a comparison of quality between public childcare centres and private facilities, it has been elicited that there has been a positive change to improve service quality in the childcare centres by reducing the number of children per employee and the working hours of care workers. However,

the disparity between the public and private sectors regarding care worker salaries appears to have remained constant for the period of interest.

Autonomy and service availability: Regarding the availability for using the childcare services in the care market without constraints regarding provision, it could be argued that the options have become diverse for parents, as these now include extended hours care, night time and 24 hour provision as well as holiday programmes. However, the use of these extra childcare programmes among all mothers has remained limited.

The next section will assess the changes in recent years in the level of care practice in South Korea in terms of the conditions under which care is carried out and received.

5.2 Changed trends in conditions for care practice

This section addresses whether the socialization of care has gone forward and, if so, to what extent, as well as whether this has been reflected in care practice. The intention is to compare the conditions for purchasing/using childcare services, and to critically examine policy changes in terms of their limitations i.e. where they have and have not altered the conditions for care practice. The assessment deploys three dimensions: affordability, adequacy and autonomy in care practice.

Affordability and financial access: This focuses on changes in financial access for those using childcare services during the period of interest, in particular with respect to care practice. The aim is to ascertain how much of the actual economic burden of childcare costs have been covered during this time by family income, in terms of mothers' employment status, children's age and region. It also assesses how families decided whether to use the service and if not, the reasons for leaving paid jobs rather than being employed in the labour market. This cannot be explained by one factor alone, but the financial burden of childcare cost has been identified as significant when mothers are determining whether to work in the labour market or care for their children themselves, at home. Finally, there is assessment of the potential demand for

childcare services and actual coverage of this in each of the years between 2002 and 2009.

Adequacy and parental attitudes towards the available care services: This dimension is concerned with attitudes amongst parents to employing childcare services over the time period and probes attitude surveys that compiled information on the usage of childcare services between 2002 and 2009. Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare data directly from the two available surveys regarding attitudes as some questions were asked in slightly different ways between 2002 and 2009, using different scales and different questions in each year. Therefore, the researcher decided not to compare these two data sets from 2002 and 2009 and included the survey conducted in 2004 which asked the same questions as that for 2009 with the same scaling. By comparing attitudes over time, it will be possible to elicit whether a service has been provided adequately and has met the requirements of parents in a suitable manner.

Autonomy and the reliance on informal care: This section highlights reliance on informal care, despite the availability of childcare services. Further, the dynamics of gender relations underpinning decisions to choose informal care instead of purchasing childcare services are assessed by using indicators: the main informal caregivers, the type of informal carer (grandparents and relatives not living in or living with), time duration by age of children, region and mother's employment, the nature of payment and the main caregiver within the family, sharing caring work between men and women in the family in 2009. By bringing forward these indicators, the researcher aims to illuminate the prevailing use of informal care and to reveal the trends or shifts, if any, over time. The extent and durability of the reliance on informal care alongside the use of childcare services, and the gender relations among family members in terms of who carries out informal caring are considered.

5.2.1 Affordability and financial access

The burden of childcare cost has been identified as a significant influence when mothers are determining whether to work in the labour market or care for their children themselves, at home. For example, Connelly and Kimmel (2003) have

posited that for single mothers this burden is more of an issue than for married couples. With respect to the burden of childcare costs, the data in Table 5-5 shows the extent to which parents experienced financial pressures when they paid fees, for the years 2002 and 2009. Overall, the percentage of parents who reported that they found the pressure was ‘slightly burdensome’ increased during the period from 33% to 46%, whilst the percentage identifying the pressures as ‘reasonable’ decreased from 51% to 22%. From the same table, the information about income levels highlights the fact that the groups of lower and lower middle families showed a gradual rise from 35% to 42% for those who had responded ‘slightly burdensome’, while the proportion answering ‘reasonable’ decreased greatly. In the groups of upper middle and upper, the answer of ‘very burdensome’ increased remarkably, whereas the percentage under the answer category ‘reasonable’ declined substantially. This would indicate that, for the time period of interest, the overall burden of paying childcare costs has increased steeply rather than diminished.

Table 5-5 The extent of the burden of paying childcare costs, as reported by parents

Unit: %

Income level ¹	Income range ² (KRW10,000)	Very Burdensome		Slightly burdensome		Reasonable		No burden	
		2002	2009	2002	2009	2002	2009	2002	2009
Lower	Below 99	28	18	40	45	24	18	-	20
Lower middle	100-199	11	14	35	42	49	22	1	23
Middle	200-299	7	20	39	49	48	19	3	13
Upper middle	300-399	4	20	29	48	60	18	6	15
Upper	Above 400	-	10	18	48	71	30	12	12
Total		9	16	33	46	51	22	4	16

Note:

1. Having taken into account that the minimum living cost in 2009 was KRW 1,327,000 per month for a family of four (MHW, 2010), when deciding on these income bands this researcher also had to respect the income range in the original survey data sets. They are therefore divided into: lower, lower middle, middle, upper middle and upper categories.
2. The groupings for family income have been re-categorized in order to allow for comparison of the two data sets.
3. Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Furthermore, Figure 5-11 sets out the trends that can be observed regarding the ratio of childcare costs to household income for the years 2002 and 2009. In both years, the lower level income groups with less than KRW 2,500,000 tended to spend a greater proportion on childcare costs than the other higher income groups. The groups of households with relatively higher incomes had to spend an almost similar proportion as that expended by the highest income band. In general, the different levels of childcare costs for the two years for which the data is presented that expenditure by households has approximately doubled for the whole range of income levels. In responding to whether the financial burden imposed by needing to pay childcare costs reduced during the period of enquiry, it appears that there has been scarcely any shift as the lower level income groups still tend to spend the most, proportionally, as compared to other groups.

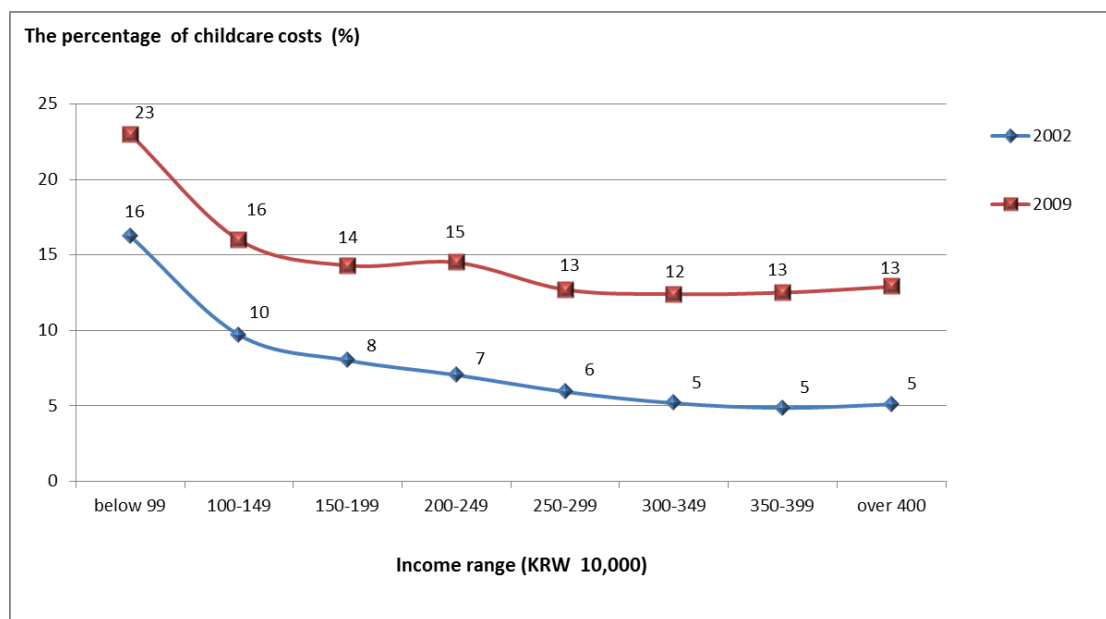


Figure 5-11 The percentage of childcare costs to household incomes for the years 2002 and 2009

Note: Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002); Seo et al., (2009)

Further detail regarding childcare related expenditure is given in Figures 5-12, 5-13 and 5-14. The following analyses address the ratio of childcare costs to income (for 2009) in terms of the number of children in a family, geographical region and mothers' employment status. Figure 5-12 highlights that having more than three children proportionately demands expenditure on more childcare costs: it costs nearly twice as much as when there is just one child. Regarding regional location and mothers' employment, the data given in Figures 5-13 and 5-14 suggest that these two factors do not appear to be very significant influences upon childcare costs, but the situation for families in big cities appears to be slightly more adverse than in the other two locations (see Figure 5-13). According to Figure 5-14, the data for both groups, employed and unemployed mothers, show similar results. There could be a number of explanations for this finding regarding the employment status of mothers. For instance, perhaps no noticeable changes in overall family income result when the mother is a second earner, or indeed is not working, but the household still has to expend a similar proportion of its resources on using formal childcare services.

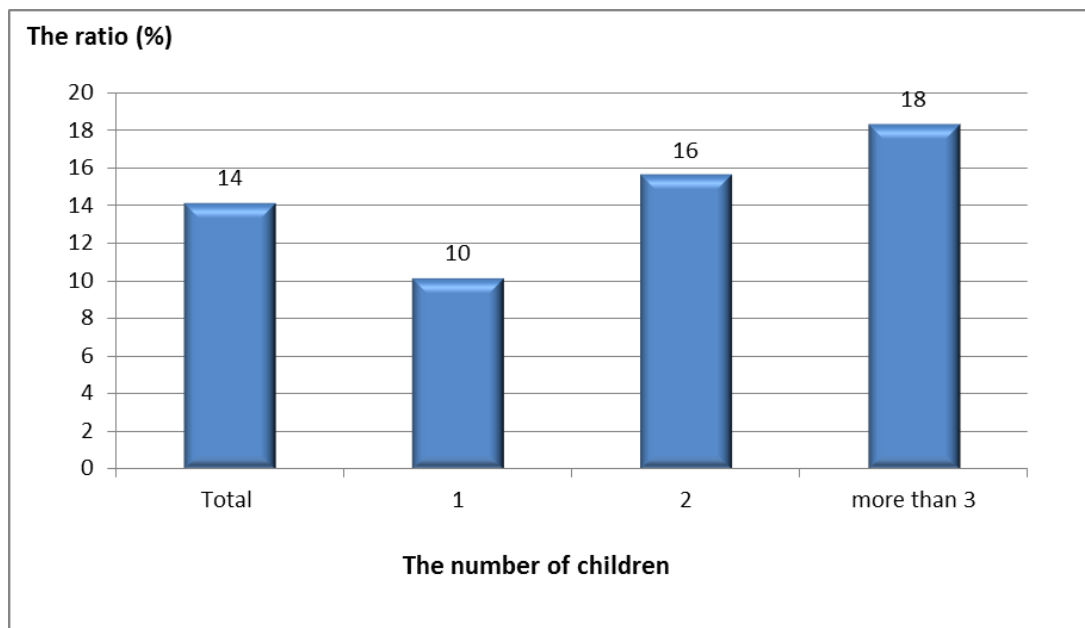


Figure 5-12 The ratio of childcare costs to family income according to the number of children (2009)

Note: Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.143)

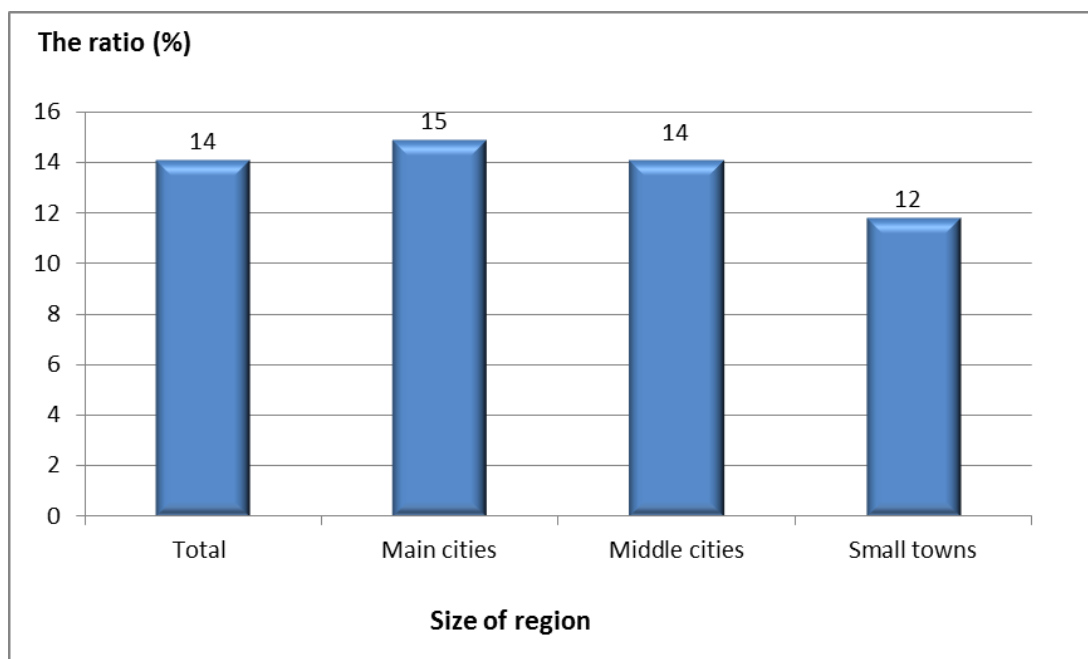


Figure 5-13 The ratio of childcare costs to family income according to geographical region (2009)

Note: Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.143)

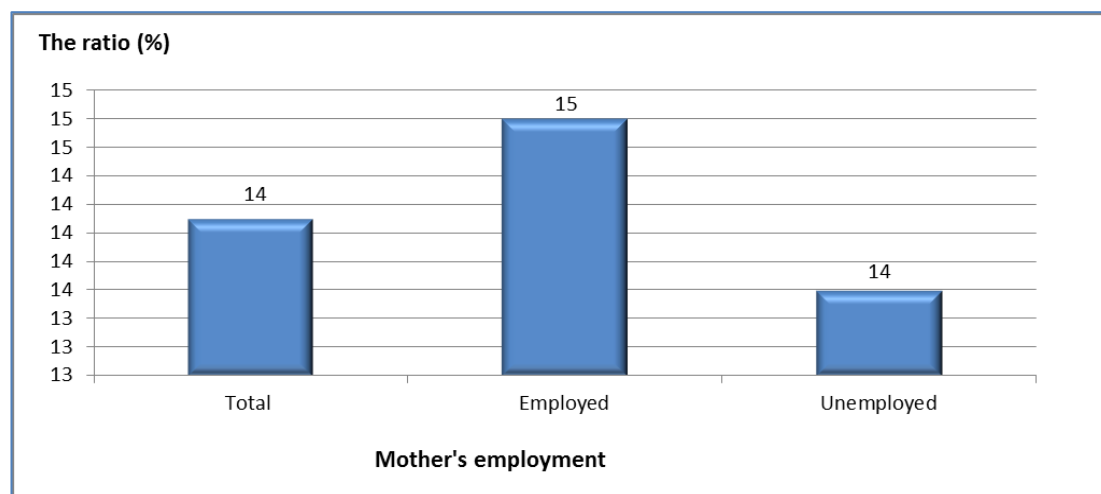


Figure 5-14 The ratio of childcare costs to family income according to mothers' employment status (2009)

Note: Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.143)

In sum, the financial pressure of childcare costs has remained fairly constant during the period under investigation, and may even have increased slightly for lower income family groups. Indeed, these as a proportion of total family income have grown for the full range of household income groups. However, it should be noted that the lower income groups still spent proportionally more household income than the high income ones. Also, in terms of having the finances to access services, employment status of the mothers does not appear to have a significant impact on the proportion of income spent on childcare costs. That is, the evidence suggests that mothers working as a second earner do not receive sufficient remuneration to relieve the financial burden of such expenditure. As will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, the issue of the alleviation of the burden of childcare costs was originally identified as the primary objective of the reform process. However, the outcome regarding this at the level of care conditions does not appear to support the intended improvement of widening financial access regarding childcare services. This is consistent with Heckman's (1974) claim that female employment in the labour market does not ameliorate the burden of childcare costs and hence, can be regarded as a reduction of net wage, which thus reduces the incentive for women to go out to work.

5.2.2 Adequacy and parental attitudes towards the care services they have used/desire

In this section, general attitudes to using childcare services are compared. The original intention of this researcher was to analyse the results from the surveys carried out in 2002 and 2009 in order to probe whether there had been any changes in these regarding childcare after the reforms to policy had taken place. However, on examination of the data sets two issues became clear. Firstly, each was conducted using a different range of indicators to measure expressions of attitude. That is, the Likert scale format in 2009 was based on a five point scale, whilst for 2002 a four point one was adopted. These different scales of measurement could have influenced the results and thus it was deemed inappropriate to attempt to directly compare them. A second problem emerged when it became evident that in 2002 different issues were covered, with the one in 2009 containing very detailed questioning, for instance, about attitudes to: costs, health management, parents' participation, curricula, and

care workers, many of which were not included in the 2002 data. Hence, this researcher decided that it was not appropriate to compare these two data sets from 2002 and 2009 as she wanted to assure a rigorous analysis of parental attitudes about employing childcare services over the period of interest. However, the data collection for 2004 involved asking the same questions as that for 2009 and the results in both years were included in the survey report in 2009. Hence, more meaningful comparisons can be made than with that for 2002. Moreover, given this chosen date was only two years after 2002, it was still expected that significant differences would emerge in the five year period up to 2009 and this turns out to be the case. Also, it needs to be borne in mind that the main reforms regarding child care took place after 2004 and hence, their impact can be assessed by considering this particular time period.

Before examining the comparison of the satisfaction with the childcare services between 2004 and 2009, an idea of the general satisfaction in 2002 is presented. That is, Figure 5-15 reveals that the parental expressions regarding the atmosphere in the childcare centres, cleanness and meals provided, was relatively higher than other features, for example, macro-environment, indoor environment and curriculum tools. In particular, in the case of the satisfaction with the curriculum, this had the lowest satisfaction rating, indicating that it did not meet with parents' expectations. Figure 5-16 also specifically illustrates the degree of the general satisfaction with the childcare services by the type of the facilities, mothers' employment and children's age. Surprisingly, the satisfaction with the childcare services in the workplace was the highest among all the types of facilities, closely followed by home-based individual childcare centres. However, satisfaction in the incorporated organizations and centre-based childcare facilities, which represented the largest number of childcare centres in the care market in terms of the numbers of children enrolled in 2002 (see Figures 5-15 and 5-16) received the lowest overall rating. Regarding mothers' employment status and children's, there was very little difference between the two identified categories for each of these two factors.

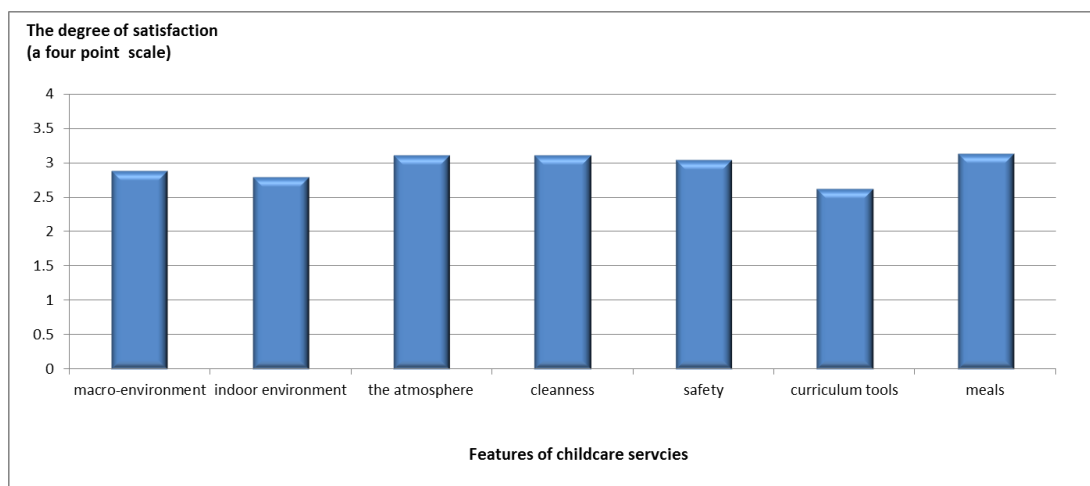


Figure 5-15 Parental expression of general satisfaction regarding the features of childcare services for 2002

Note: Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002, p.259)

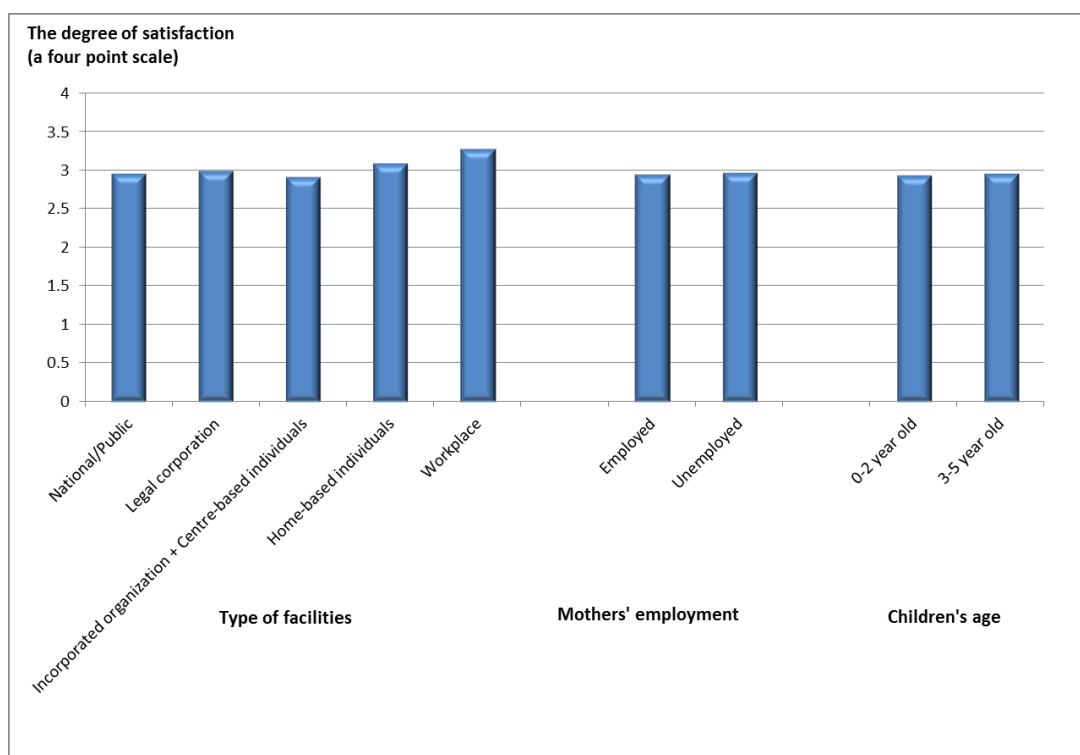


Figure 5-16 Parental expression of general satisfaction by types of facilities, mothers' employment and children's age in 2002

Note: Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002, p.259, 261)

Next, Figure 5-17 illustrates the changes recorded in terms of general satisfaction of parents when they employed childcare services for the years 2004 and 2009. Overall, it appears that between these two years, attitudes became more positive towards the services, but only very slightly, by less than 5%. Moreover, the average general satisfaction change per year showed no significant difference, less than 2% and most notably, satisfaction with the cost of childcare has remained at the same level, with 65% of respondents reporting this. Bearing in mind that the policy reform was mostly based on concern about how to alleviate the financial burden of parents, this unchanged satisfaction with the childcare cost over time shows that little change in terms of the delivery of care practice was perceived by the users. Turning to consider the data in Table 5.6, which provides average Likert scores on a five point scale, it emerges that general satisfaction with the different types of childcare facilities has risen between 2004 and 2009. However, it is clear that the level of satisfaction expressed with regards to the services provided by the national and public type of childcare centres as well as the legal corporation form of facilities was still higher than that reported for the other categories. In addition, the degree of satisfaction recorded with respect to individual private childcare centres remained the lowest of all at only approximately 3.5, i.e. a moderate level. Surprisingly, satisfaction with the workplace based centres has increased during the same period, which was the highest at 3.99 among the total facilities in 2009. This type of childcare centres is supposed to be operated by employers near either working places or the workers' housing areas according to the terms of the Childcare Act.

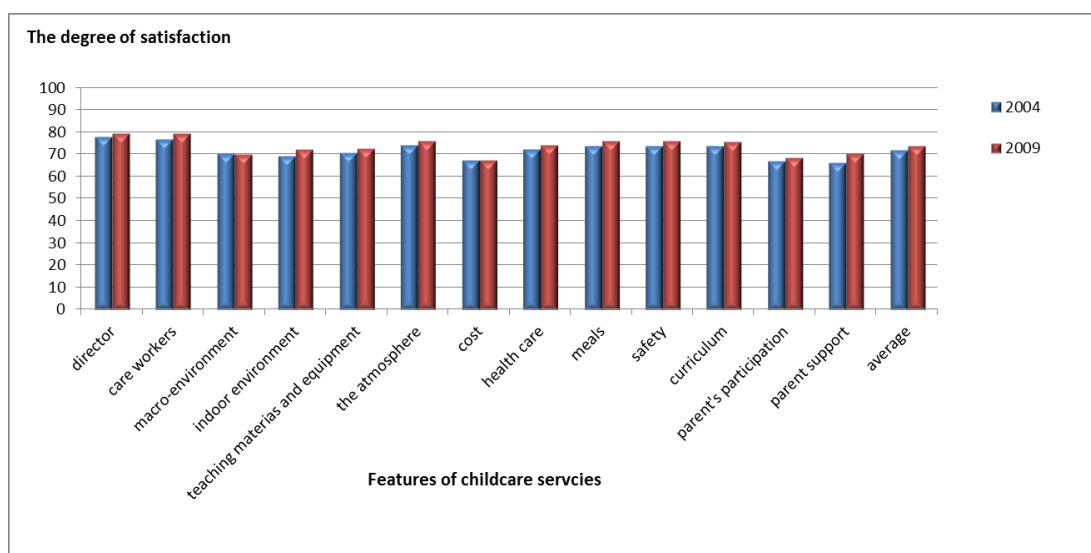


Figure 5-17 Parental expressions of general satisfaction regarding features of childcare services for 2004 and 2009

Note:

1. The degree of satisfaction for both focal years was already fully calibrated and published for comparison purposes in the survey report in 2009.
2. Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.283)

Table 5-6 General satisfaction levels recorded from parents across the range of childcare centre types for 2004 and 2009

Unit: five point scale

	2004 ¹	2009	Total average
National/Public	3.61	3.73	3.67
Legal corporation	3.70	3.71	3.71
Incorporated organizations	3.66	3.93	3.80
Centre based individual	3.55	3.61	3.58
Home-based individual	3.54	3.81	3.68
Parental cooperation ²	-	4.40	
Workplace	3.69	3.99	3.84
Total average	3.59	3.68	3.64

Note:

1. The data in 2004 was converted into a five point scale in the survey report in 2009.
2. The parental cooperation childcare centres form was institutionalised in 2005 and thus the survey

‘National attitudes to using childcare services in 2004’ did not include information for them.

3. Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009)

In sum, the satisfaction levels identified above with regards to employing childcare services were very similar after the policy reforms to those prevailing before these changes, with overall satisfaction improving only slightly. In particular, the extent of satisfaction with costs has remained constant during the observed period. Poor service quality, especially in private childcare centres, was considered as a main factor causing low uptake of childcare services in the discussions that unfolded during the reform process (see Chapter 7 sections 7.1.1 and 7.2.1). Therefore, it would appear that in spite of the good intentions of the policy makers to improve service quality through reforms of the childcare system, the general public is of the opinion that insufficient progress has been made, especially with regards to cost and quality of provision.

5.2.3 Autonomy and reliance on informal care

Parents, more specifically, mothers who wish to work have often had to seek informal care arrangements for their children. Further, this reliance on an informal care network, termed a patchwork childcare arrangement (Kreyenfeld & Hank, 2000), is a significant determinant when it comes to a mother’s decision to engage with paid employment. As in many other societies, childcare arrangements made by mothers in South Korea can take a multitude of forms, including: care by relatives, private child minders as well as a new form of arrangement involving day care at private institutes known as ‘*hakwon*’ (Peng, 2009, 2011). Given this acknowledgment of the dependency of many mothers on these informal care arrangements, the meaning of autonomy in this research is defined as the availability of childcare in the care market without there being any constraints. Moreover, there are different gender relations between men and women regarding caring work in that the latter often resort to informal care, either doing it themselves or employing others, such as relatives, rather than using formal services. As pointed out above, this has led to women’s position in the labour market being marginalised, with their status being defined either as just caregivers or having the dual roles of workers and housewives (J.-k. Lee, 2005; J. Millar, 2006; P. Taylor-Gooby, 2004a). These different gender

dynamics between men and women in doing caring work and in participating in the labour markets have previously been defined in this chapter as gender relations (see the section 2.3 in Chapter 2). The aim here is to illuminate the prevailing use of informal care, despite the availability of formal childcare services through the care market, thereby revealing the differences in men and women's experience in employing care services in the care markets. The definition of informal care in both the surveys for 2002 and 2009 refers to that provided by: grandparents, relatives, child minders or babysitters as well as private institutes not employing any formal childcare service. Relatives here covered all kinds of kinship networks, for example, siblings of parents and children, but grandparents, as can be seen, were assessed as a separate category.

Tables 5-7 and 5.8 list the factors involved in parental decision making regarding care for the years 2002 and 2009 respectively. The data gives an indication of the reasons why informal care was opted for, in spite of the availability of childcare services near the family home. It should be noted that this data has been taken from the responses to two surveys in which this set of questions took slightly differently forms. For instance, whereas the response options in the survey carried out in 2002 included the factor 'the preference of the person who is currently caring for their children', the possible responses in 2009 did not, thus caution has to be taken when attempting to draw comparisons.

The main explanatory factors given by respondents, regardless of location (region) or mothers' employment status, in 2002, were 'the preference of the person who is currently caring for their children' and 'too early [for the child] to go to childcare centres' (see Table 5-8 in this chapter). In the same year, the difficulty in meeting the economic burden of childcare costs was regarded as one of the key factors in the preference for using informal care rather than employing childcare services. By 2009 in Table 5-8, regardless of mothers' employment and the region, the key reason given for taking up informal care was worry about young children's abilities to adapt to the facilities (i.e. 'too young to adapt to childcare centres'). The burden of costs did not appear as the main factor deterring choice of employing formal childcare in the year. However, in small towns the impact of the cost burden in persuading

parents not to select childcare centres was slightly higher with 10% of respondents citing this reason and only 5% of respondents in main cities and 8% in middle-sized cities. Regarding the data collected in 2009, as respondents did not have the chance to select the answer ‘the preference of the person who is currently caring for their children’ given in the earlier survey, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions as to whether, had this response been available, it would have again been the main reason reported in the survey for that year. Nevertheless, the evidence of these surveys is that the lack of trust in childcare services, as explained in Chapter 7, and also indicated in Table 5-8, the age at which parents can feel content with having their children cared for is still the main explanation for the preference for informal care.

Table 5-7 The factors influencing the decision in favour of using informal care in 2002

Unit: %

	Region			Mothers' employment	
	Main cities	Middle sized cities	Small towns	Employed	Non-employed
Child is too young to go to childcare centres	21	26	23	21	30
Child is too old to go to childcare centres	15	14	18	15	20
The preference of the person who is currently caring for their children	29	31	15	31	20
Difficulty in meeting economic burden / cost	8	7	21	6	10
Difficulty in finding acceptable opening times when they want to use the service	6	12	3	9	-
Cannot be bothered to bring children to childcare centres	2	-	3	2	-
No trust in the safety in childcare centres	8	6	5	7	10
Mind their children being cared for with other children	1	1	-	1	-

No good for children to experience changing environment	6	1	8	5	5
Too long a waiting list	2	1	-	1	5
Etc	3	1	5	3	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002, p.399)

Table 5-8 The factors influencing the decision in favour of using informal care in 2009

Unit: %

	Region			Mothers' employment	
	Main cities	Middle cities	Small towns	Employed	Non-employed
Child is too young to adapt to childcare centres	70	75	57	68	76
Difficulty in meeting economic burden / cost	5	8	11	8	4
Difficulty in finding acceptable opening times when they want to use the service	11	5	6	8	8
Cannot be bothered to bring children to childcare centres every day	1	1	2	2	-
Inadequate environment	2	-	-	1	1
Mind their children being cared for with other children	4	4	6	3	5
No good for children to experience changing environments	2	4	2	3	1
Too long a waiting list	-	-	9	1	-
Have not found any good facilities near by their house	4	4	6	3	6
Etc	3	1	-	1	1

Total	100	100	100	100	100
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Note: Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.332)

Table 5-9 reveals the main caregivers in both years of interest. The respondents in 2009 were allowed to choose two answers in the questionnaire, whereas only one answer was required in 2002 and given this difference it is to be expected that the overall scores would be higher in 2009 than in 2002, as is the case. Overall, the proportions of relatives and nonrelatives as informal carers, regardless of whether or not they were living in, increased dramatically over the time period in question for nearly all categories. By contrast, the involvement of grandparents over the focal period appears to have remained much the same and in some categories, given the two question issue for the 2009 figures, as pointed out above, the figures suggest that their involvement may have actually fallen. This outcome implies that parents are becoming more and more reliant on private informal care services, such as babysitters, child minders and private institutes for this form of care. However, despite these changes grandparents continue to play an important role in caring for young children regardless of their age. Nevertheless, the regional figures reinforce the evidence that this generation are being relied upon less than previously, in particular, in the small towns. The reason for this might be either the opportunity to live with grandparents might be less or the number of working mothers in small towns might be less than other bigger sized cities.

Table 5-9 Main informal caregivers in 2002, 2009

Unit: %

	Living in						Not living in					
	Grandparents		Relatives		Nonrelatives		Grandparents		Relatives		Nonrelatives	
	'02	'09	'02	'09	'02	'09	'02	'09	'02	'09	'02	'09
<i>Age of children</i>												
0-2	39	27	2	22	1	42	36	36	7	30	15	58
3-5	60	21	3	31	1	17	26	29	4	26	6	30
<i>Region</i>												

Main cities	51	43	5	51	1	82	24	50	7	54	12	45
Middle cities	60	38	4	49	-	18	26	39	4	41	6	38
Small towns	76	19	3	-	-	-	16	11	3	5	3	18
<i>Mothers' employment</i>												
Employed	54	68	2	74	1	91	29	73	6	64	9	84
Unemployed	39	22	10	14	-	9	30	23	14	33	13	11

Note:

1. The respondents in 2009 were allowed to choose two options in the questionnaire.
2. Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002, p.383-384); Seo et al., (2009, p.330)

Apart from the observations above, this table reveals some apparent stark differences between the two observed years, which merit further investigation, as is explained next. First, there is the sharp rise in employed mothers' requirements for non living in care from grandparents and relatives. Table 5-10 illustrates the pattern of using informal care among working mothers from grandparents and relatives who do not live with them. Almost half of them used informal care services from Monday to Friday and even on Sundays, 24% of these mothers reported that they used informal care services from grandparents and/or other relatives. It seems that the ages of the children were not a significant factor in relation to the use of informal care services but the regional aspect was. For example in this regard, in the main cities half of mothers elected to use the informal care services from Monday to Friday, but more than 30% of parents in middle sized cities and small towns used informal care services from Monday to Sunday. Overall, more than 80% of working mothers used informal care services on a regular basis during the week from grandparents and relatives even in the case of not living together with them.

Table 5-10 The type of informal care in 2009 according to duration: grandparents and relatives not living in with employed mothers

Unit: %

	Mon-Sun	Mon-Sat	Mon-Fri	2-3 Times per week	Irregular	Total
<i>Total</i>	24	16	41	6	13	100

<i>Age of children</i>						
0-2	18	20	43	4	15	100
3-5	30	13	39	4	11	100
<i>Region</i>						
Main cities	15	16	50	6	13	100
Middle cities	30	17	37	4	12	100
Small towns	38	15	22	10	15	100

Note:

1. The data about grandparent and relatives living together were not available for 2009.
2. Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.339)

Secondly, as shown in the Table 5-9 above, informal care by nonrelatives dramatically increased over the time regardless of living in or not living in. Indeed, Table 5-11 shows the length of time in hours of informal care by nonrelatives, per week, for 2009. Overall, it appears that more time was needed by parents in terms of informal care when the children were younger and when the mothers were employed. For example, parents with infants aged 0 to 2 years old still had 45.9 hours of informal care per week, while those with 3 to 5 year old children needed 23.2 hours. For the case of employed mothers, parents required nearly twice as many hours of informal care as non-working mothers. In addition, in 2009 parents in the main and middle sized cities required more informal care than parents in small towns. These outcomes reveal two key findings, firstly, the main need for informal care in recent years has shifted towards infants and secondly, on average, working mothers still require informal care for more than 40 hours per week.

Table 5-11 The time duration of use of informal care per week in 2002 and 2009 by age of children, region and mothers' employment

Unit: hours

	2009
<i>Age of children</i>	
0-2	45.9

3-5	23.2
Subtotal average	34.6
<i>Region</i>	
Main cities	39.3
Middle cities	45.7
Small towns	18.1
Subtotal average	34.37
<i>Mothers' employment</i>	
Employed	41.1
Unemployed	25.0
Subtotal average	33.1
Total	36.6

Note: Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.363-364)

Table 5-12 provides information regarding whether or not the parents who used informal care services paid the informal caregivers, and if so, the nature of this payment. In general, regular payments to grandparents and other relatives, regardless of whether they were living in or not, decreased substantially over the focal period, whereas payments to nonrelatives greatly increased, especially in respect of those living in the same dwelling. Regarding the age of the children, in the case of infants (0 to 2 year old children), the frequency of regular payment decreased almost by half and likewise, in the case of unemployed mothers, it significantly decreased during the focal time period from 33% to 5%. However, for the case of working mothers, nearly half of the parents still paid for informal care on a regular basis. In addition, for the case of not living in, 40% of parents paid regularly for care by grandparents and nearly all of them (96%) paid for it given by nonrelatives on a regular basis. These outcomes bring two key findings, firstly, most of parents needed to pay on a regular basis for informal care by nonrelatives, whether they lived in or not and nearly half of the parents who used informal care by grandparents especially in the category of not living in, also needed to pay regularly. Secondly, in the case of

employed mothers, nearly half of the parents needed to pay regularly for informal care in both years, whereas for the case of unemployed mothers, the tendency to pay for the care on a regular basis had decreased from 33% in 2002 to 5% in 2009.

Table 5-12 Whether parents pay for informal care and the nature of this payment, for the years 2002 and 2009

Unit: %

	Regular		Irregular		Informal arrangement ¹	
	'02	'09	'02	'09	'02	'09
<i>Living together</i>						
Grandparents	23	16	12	3	65	82
Relatives	46	14	15	3	39	83
Nonrelatives	50	85	0	0	50	15
<i>Not living together</i>						
Grandparents	55	40	16	7	28	53
Relatives	59	17	25	4	16	79
Nonrelatives	93	96	2	1	5	13
<i>Age of children</i>						
0-2	63	31	14	5	24	64
3-5	39	30	14	7	47	62
<i>Size of region</i>						
Main cities	48	33	13	6	38	62
Middle cities	41	31	12	5	1	64
Small towns	17	22	13	7	0	71
<i>Mothers' employment</i>						
Employed	44	43	13	7	43	51
Unemployed	33	5	15	3	52	92

Note:

1. Informal arrangement includes in-kind, offering accommodation and so on and there was no option in relation to 'offering accommodation' in the survey of 2009.
2. Data from the sources for two years have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002, p.388); Seo et al., (2009, p.348-9, 368)

The following analysis seeks to gauge changes regarding shared caring work between men and women within the family apart from using informal care by investigating whether gender roles in carrying out caring work at home have shifted over time. Table 5-13 reports data for 2002 regarding the person who mostly carries out caring work for children according to mothers' employment status within the family. Regardless of whether mothers are employed or not, the main caregiver appears to be the mother, with figures of 82% and 100% respectively. Moreover, where mothers were employed, grandparents were identified as the second main caregivers and as pointed out above, when they were not employed in the labour market, it emerges that mothers were responsible for almost all the caring work for their children (100%). Little evidence has emerged to show fathers as being the main caregiver with a proportion of just 2% in this role, even when mothers were employed.

Table 5-13 The main caregiver within the family: the individuals who mostly cared for children in 2002

	Employed	Unemployed	Total
Father	2	0	1
Mother	82	100	91
Siblings	2	-	1
Parents-in-law (father's side)	9	0	5
Parents-in-law (mother's side)	4	0	2
Relatives	1	0	0
Non relatives	-	-	-
Total	100	100	100

Note: Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2002, p.436)

Table 5-14 analyses the data from 2009 regarding the role of main informal day time caregiver according to region, mothers' employment status and family income. Unlike the picture presented in Table 5-13 for the 2002 data, in the case of employed mothers, the proportion of respondents citing 'mother' at 23% observed for 2009 is

relatively lower than that of 82% given for 2002. This could be attributable to a slightly different nuance in the survey question posed in 2009, which specifically referred to ‘during the day time’. Consequently, interpretation of comparisons made between these two results has to be tentative. Nevertheless, it is still clear that in general terms, mothers were still the main caregivers in 2009. In addition, the participation of grandparents on the father and mother’s side in 2009 had risen when mothers were employed, with the proportions being 16% and 18%, respectively in 2009, up from only 9% and 4%, respectively, in 2002. On the other hand, instead of caring for children by relying on informal caregivers at home, it is helpful to find the rate of usage of directly employed childcare institutes such as *hakwon* or babysitters and so on as the main means of caring for children. Regarding family income, there was a tendency for mothers to be the main caregiver in the lower family income groups (between KRW 990,000 and KRW 2,490,000) as compared to mothers in higher income groups (between KRW 4,000,000 and KRW 6,000,000).

Table 5-14 The person who mostly cared for children informally ‘during the day’ in 2009

Units: %, KRW 10,000

	Father	Mother	Siblings of children	Siblings of parents	Parents-in-law (father's side)	Parents-in-law (mother's side)	Relatives	Non relatives	Institutes	Total
<i>Region</i>										
Big cities	1	66	1	0	8	8	0	2	14	100
Middle cities	1	70	2	1	6	6	0	1	14	100
Small cities	2	70	1	0	6	4	0	1	17	100
<i>Mothers' employment</i>										
Employed	2	23	3	1	16	18	0	4	33	100
Unemployed	1	95	-	-	0	0	-	0	4	100
<i>Family income</i>										
< 99	3	74	3	-	6	1	-	1	13	100
100-149	2	72	3	1	6	2	-	-	15	100
150-199	2	80	1	-	3	5	-	-	10	100

200-249	1	78	1	0	3	2	-	0	15	100
250-299	2	74	1	0	6	4	0	1	13	100
300-349	1	74	1	1	7	4	-	1	12	100
350-399	1	69	1	-	9	2	1	1	16	100
400-499	0	52	1	1	10	12	0	1	24	100
500-599	-	49	-	1	17	14	1	3	16	100
> 600	0	30	0	2	11	27	-	12	17	100
Total	1	68	1	1	7	6	0	1	14	100

Note: Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.119)

Table 5-15 shows the breakdown of caring for children between men and women in the home for 2009. With respect to this, more than 60% of wives tended to carry out the caring work for children at home, (calculated by adding the proportions for ‘entirely wife’ recorded at 21.9% and for ‘mostly wife’ at 42.5%). In fact, only 29.2% of couples reported that they shared caring work and the proportion of husbands undertaking caring work remained low at only 0.8% (calculated by summing up the figure for ‘mostly husband’ at 0.6% and that for ‘entirely husband’ 0.2%). With regards to location, no significant difference emerged concerning allocating caring work between wives and husbands in the different regions with the proportion recorded for ‘mostly wife’ in small towns being only slightly higher (at 46.9%) than main cities (41.8%) and in medium-sized cities (41.4%). Turning to employment status, regarding employed mothers, the percentage of couples sharing care ‘together’, was reported to be 39.8%, a figure that was relatively higher than that for unemployed mothers (24.2%). In the case of the unemployed mothers, more than 75% of the wives tended to do the caring with the category of ‘entirely wife’ being 26.9% and ‘mostly wife’ at 48.4%, while sharing care ‘together’ was reported at only 24.2%. In terms of family income, it appears that the tendency to share care work ‘together’ was higher among the higher than the lower income groups. For instance, the proportion of ‘mostly wife’ undertaking caring among those with a family income of less than KRW 990,000 was 48.2%, (the highest figure) while for the wealthiest income group, the proportion reporting undertaking childcare ‘together’ was the highest, at 37.8%.

Table 5-15 Sharing caring work between men and women in the family in 2009

Units: %, KRW 10,000

	Entirely wife	Mostly wife	Equal shared together	Mostly husband	Entirely husband	Others	Total
<i>Region</i>							
Main cities	22.4	41.8	29.0	0.8	0.2	5.8	100.0
Medium-sized cities	23.2	41.4	29.4	0.2	0.1	5.7	100.0
Small towns	17.7	46.9	29.0	0.7	0.7	5.0	100.0
<i>Mothers' employment</i>							
Employed	13.9	33.2	39.8	1.5	0.2	11.4	100.0
Unemployed	26.9	48.4	24.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	100.0
Mothers' absence	2.0	22.0	-	-	6.0	70.0	100.0
<i>Family income</i>							
< 99	20.2	48.2	24.0	1.9	1.9	3.8	100.0
100-149	24.2	40.0	31.2	-	-	4.7	100.0
150-199	26.0	45.9	22.9	0.2	0.2	4.8	100.0
200-249	23.9	45.4	27.2	0.5	-	3.0	100.0
150-299	25.6	41.5	28.2	0.6	0.3	3.8	100.0
300-349	18.1	45.1	31.6	0.3	0.6	4.3	100.0
350-399	17.4	40.7	36.1	0.6	-	5.2	100.0
400-499	21.6	40.0	29.0	0.4	-	9.0	100.0
500-599	21.2	37.8	31.4	0.6	-	9.0	100.0
> 600	10.6	35.5	37.8	2.2	-	13.9	100.0
Total	21.9	42.5	29.2	0.6	0.2	5.6	100.0

Note: Data from the sources for the year have been extracted and presented as a simple comparison by the researcher for the purposes of this thesis.

Source: Seo et al., (2009, p.154)

To sum up, the data analysis has shown that a strong preference for informal care has continued to persist between the years 2002 and 2009. Moreover, for situations concerning younger children and working mothers, the demand for informal care

appeared higher than that for engaging formal childcare services. In spite of the availability of such services, it appears that parents wanted to use informal care services because of their lack of trust in childcare services in centres (see Table 5.8). As a result of this, reliance on family members who undertake care work, for example, grandparents and close relatives, has increased. In terms of the sharing of caring work at home, women have continued to be the main care givers but for working mothers, the possibility of being a main caregiver has reduced somewhat over time, as compared to unemployed mothers. Nonetheless, mothers remained the main care givers, regardless of whether or not they were in paid work.

5.2.4 Summary

This section has focused on the conditions under which care is carried out and received in circumstances where childcare services were employed. Comparison between periods before and after the policy reforms occurred have been analysed by the three key dimensions of: affordability and financial access, adequacy and care satisfaction, and autonomy and the reliance on informal care. Significant findings have emerged with respect to these elements.

Affordability and financial access: Regarding this dimension, the financial burden on lower income groups still has remained more pressing when compared to higher ones and in spite of increased governmental subsidies, it appears that the problems faced by some parents in finding sufficient finances to enable them to access formal childcare services have not been resolved. The main outcome appears to be that these financial burdens have not only led to a suppression of the rate of working participation rate for mothers but an unwillingness or inability to employ childcare services (Figure 5.15).

Adequacy and care satisfaction: Under this heading the improvement of service quality has been an important goal, subsequent to addressing the challenges of the financial burden of childcare costs (See Chapter 7 sections 7.1.1 and 7.2.1). Regarding this, it has emerged that satisfaction with service quality has not improved substantially during the time period of interest. Rather, satisfaction levels remained constant and in particular, satisfaction with childcare services in the individual

private sector registered the lowest scoring. These outcomes throw in to question the spending of substantial governmental subsidies without any apparent improvement in service quality.

Autonomy and reliance on informal care: Despite the policy initiatives instigated regarding childcare policy that were undertaken because the issue of care was at a crossroads and demanded attention, as set out in Chapter 3, the reliance on informal care has remained strong for the years studied. The tendency to rely on the help of private informal care, such as babysitters, child minders and private institutes had appeared as the main source by 2009. Moreover, the trend in relying on the help of children's grandparents has increased and is most drawn upon from the fathers' side, but more recently there has been growth in this arrangement on the mothers'. In general, it is concluded that employing the older generation in informal child care instead of sharing the burden with others, namely husbands/partners and/or the wider society, still remains the preference for working mothers in South Korea. Perhaps this preference might be put down to a lack of trust in formal childcare services, with people maintaining a cultural preference for informal caring (Tables 5-7 and 5-8). In sum, from the analysis, in terms of the gender division in caring, family members, especially mothers and grandmothers still shoulder the main work as caregivers.

5.3 Summary of this chapter

The selected statistical data in this chapter has been presented to explore care issues and, in detail has served to assess the changes in the institutional settings and the conditions under which care is carried out and received in circumstances where childcare services were employed. Given the doubt about whether the policy of the socialisation of care has gone forward appropriately given the level of institutional provision and care conditions, it is too great a claim to say there have been substantial changes in terms of the framework adopted in this research, that is, the three dimensions, affordability, adequacy and autonomy. The explanatory phase in the next two chapters 6 and 7 will seek to look behind the data and given insight into the conclusion, relying on other data sources: in-depth interviews and policy documentary analysis.

Chapter 6: Empirical findings (part II)

Identifying the problem and gender issues

The next two chapters, Chapters 6 and 7, address the data generated from the in-depth interviews and policy documents collected and analysed through a qualitative approach. To carry this out the three indicators developed in Chapter 2 for analysing gender politics in advancing the socialisation of care, are adopted respectively in each empirical chapter. That is, in this chapter, the identification of problems and gender issues are addressed, and an exploration of policy initiatives for the socialisation of care are given in Chapter 7. Throughout this study, gender politics is defined as a political endeavour pertaining to bringing a gender dimension into the policy making process, as explained in Chapter 2. Deploying this concept, these two chapters (6 and 7) follow in the order given in Table 2-1 in Chapter 2 so as to investigate the extent to which the gender politics has influenced the socialisation of childcare in South Korea.

First of all, Chapter 6 is centred on the way care issues have been dealt with in the early stage of the policy reform process. By identifying the problems encountered and specifying the related gender issues, this chapter aims to form a robust platform for developing gender sensitive analysis of policy implementation process which emerged from the identification of such problems (Béland, 2009; Jane Jenson, 2004; Squires, 2007). Following this, Chapter 7 explores the policy initiatives taken in response to the problems identified in this chapter in order to see whether they reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes and systematic discrimination against mothers in the provision of childcare services (De Beauvoir, 2010 cited in Squires 1999).

Therefore, this current chapter discusses the broad context of the reform of childcare policy and investigates the wider context regarding the policy environment surrounding the socialisation of care in childcare provision. That is, the policy context which has brought the issue of childcare to feature as a national policy before and during the reform process, covering the Kim (from 1998 to 2002) and Roh (from 2003 to 2007) administrations. Some of the data gathered from the in-depth interviews carried out with the 16 key policy actors and information gathered from

the relevant policy documents are employed to set out the policy context. Moreover, the initial headings for coding that emerged during the data analysis stage (see Chapter 4) are taken from the questions listed under ‘identifying the problem and gender issue’ in Table 2-1 in Chapter 2. These questions are; what problem/s was/were identified, what was the relevant gender issue discussed, why did it become an issue, what was the root cause, and, what factors were influencing this issue. These initial headings are further developed to illustrate in more depth the policy circumstances, namely: the main external and internal factors which brought about policy reform, the policy actors, the policy problems considered and responses to these.

6.1 Policy factors: internal and external

In this section the national mood in which the reforms were grounded regarding the internal and external policy context is set out. As was introduced in Chapter 2, the national mood is the fertile ground to which the seeds of ideas can arrive from all places and, once this fertile soil has something embedded in it, new concepts can flourish (Kingdon, 1995). With respect to this, according to Kim and Ma (2004) the national mood in South Korea was affected in discernible ways by the long lasting outcomes resulting from “The Platform for Action” at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. From the late 1990s in South Korea, this gender mainstreaming movement led to significant changes in the political climate, which became increasingly concerned about an awareness of gender matters while implementing policy agendas. At the same time, the discourse of social investment by the state (Midgley & Sherraden, 2000) spreading from various European countries, including the UK, strengthened the paradigm shift regarding perceiving any welfare expansion in terms of it being an investment in the future, rather than simply spending money on welfare expenditure with no evident returns to the economy. These changes in the national mood stimulated by certain external factors encouraged not only the expansion of welfare provision in this country, but also permitted a new paradigm to emerge when considering how to provide welfare services. In fact, the gender mainstreaming movement that was a transnational phenomenon influenced the creation of the Ministry of Gender Equality (MGE)

during the administration of President Kim Dae-jung that lasted from 1998 until 2002. After this, President Roh Moo-hyun, in power from 2002 to 2007, continued a similar domestic political ideology of considering women's issues as a key dimension of policy by establishing the terms for dealing with women's issues as part of the policy agenda, in particular by expanding the role of the MGE. This gave continuity in the national mood as women's issues were prioritised as an important item in national agendas over the duration of the two presidencies. Acknowledging the place of the gender mainstreaming movement, the following demonstrates which policy factors may have been of note in creating the fertile ground that encouraged gender issues to feature in the political arena.

6.1.1 Strong influence of the gender mainstreaming movement: an external factor

As part of the gender mainstreaming movement a strategy was issued to reframe the gender sensitive policy-making process in pursuit of gender equality (United Nations, 1995: para 1). Prior to its adoption, the Korean government endorsed the UN 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women' (CEDAW) in 1984, which led to the development of an infrastructure aimed at integrating gender issues into national development strategies. After the endorsement of CEDAW, South Korea signed up to various international treaties regarding working towards gender equality as well as the relevant International Labour Organisation's conventions¹⁵ and the government endeavoured to respect its international obligations. In particular, developing cooperative relations with international organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), have been major starting points for fostering the gender mainstreaming process in Korean society. Given such institutional developments in progressing gender equality prompted by these global movements during this period, the Korean government already had fertile ground in which to sow the seeds of further action on promoting

¹⁵ One of these examples is 'The Equal Employment Opportunity Act' which was instituted in South Korea in 1987. This aimed to guarantee equal opportunity for both men and women in employment. Particularly, this law aims to improve women's status in the labour market taking into account maternity. According to this law, women should not be discriminated against in wages, training programmes, retirement and so on, and they should be able to have the right to a reasonable work-life balance.

equality of opportunity (Y.-h. Kim, 2001; C.-B. Park, 2005). This opening up of the Korean political arena towards equal opportunities may have been significant in providing space for bringing gender issues into politics and assisted in setting up the structures for promoting women's interests and rights (Siim, 2000; Sperling, 1998; Squires, 2000).

From the 1980s, the Korean government opened the window of opportunity for gender sensitive policy making processes to influence the national political agenda. With the political democratisation of the late 1980s and early 1990s, attention to gender-related issues and commitment to gender equality became incrementally important with women's issues, such as: the economic and political empowerment of women, women's health, and violence against women being addressed in all presidential elections as the prime focus of national tasks that needed addressing¹⁶. As is elicited below, among these issues, political concern about childcare was significant, with particular attention being paid to the matter of the position of women in the labour market (Huh, 2005; Ma, 2005). Moreover, the background to such commitment to childcare could be traced to the political and economic changes in Korean society (ibid). Further, women's roles in political and economic activities increased because of the rapid progress in political democratisation and the economic growth experienced in the 1980s and 1990s (C.-B. Park, 2005). As pointed out in Chapter 2, it is contended that these conditions were sufficiently pressing to bring political attention to bear on the issue of caring work, including childcare, which, up until these social changes occurred, had been accepted as being conducted by women. Furthermore, Korea was eager to catch up with western countries, not only in terms of economic affluence and political freedoms, but also in terms of matching western counterparts in her level of social development (T.-H. Kim, 2011).

¹⁶ 'Act on the Punishment of Sexual Crimes and Protection of Victims Thereof' (1994), 'Basic Act on Women's Development' (1995), 'Prevention of Domestic Violence and Victim Protection Act'/'Special Act for the Punishment of Domestic Violence' (1997), 'Gender Discrimination Prevention and Relief Act' (1998), 'Act on the Prevention of Prostitution and Protection of Victims Thereof' and the 'Act on the Punishment of Procuring Prostitution and Associated Acts' (2004) are further examples supplementary to 'The Equal Employment Opportunity Act' (1987) mentioned earlier in footnote 1.

After the Beijing Platform of Actions in 1995, there was a substantial increase in the degree of awareness regarding gender issues in policy settings. The Korean government passed the 'Basic Act on Women's Development' at the end of 1995. Likewise, one of the most notable developments in institutional efforts to realize a gender equal society took place with the creation of the Presidential Commission on Women's Affairs in 1995, subsequently made into the Ministry of Gender Equality in 2001 under President Kim. In fact, the establishment of this governmental body which dealt with women's issues had been long awaited by women's associations such as the Korean National Council of Women (KNCW) and the Korean Women's Association United (KWAU). In addition, these administrations legislated on a series of action plans to implement gender policies; the 1st and the 2nd Basic Plan on Women's Policies (their application periods being 1998-2002 and 2003-2007, respectively). Moreover, a legal basis for mandatory gender-sensitive analysis was instituted in 2002, which led to the expansion of gender impact assessments at both central and local governmental levels (Park, 2010). Over the decade from approximately 2003 to 2013 much effort was put into developing technical tools such as these gender impact assessments, gender sensitive budgeting and gender awareness training as the key ingredients of gender mainstreaming under the initiative of the lead agency, the MGE. Hence, the government embraced the notion of gender mainstreaming as a new tool which could be used to transform the whole of the policy making process.

Upon the enactment of the National Finance Act in 2006, the Korean Women's Development Institute, a women's policy think-tank dedicated to the fulfilment of a gender equal society, set up the Gender Budgeting Centre to conduct research into the institutionalisation of gender sensitive budgeting. Regarding this, the Centre selected research projects that were conducted consecutively from 2007 to 2009 (Y. Kim, 2008). As mentioned above, so as to integrate a gender perspective into government policies, two instruments, gender-responsive budgets and gender impact assessments were widely adopted. Regarding the former, their institutionalisation was an outcome of the cooperation among women's NGOs, expert groups, lawmakers (particularly female ones), and government agencies with the contribution of women's groups being significant (Y. Kim, 2008). With regard to the latter,

starting in 2001, the Korean Women-link, a women's organisation, carried out a gender analysis on local government budgeting and planning processes. Moreover, the KWAU, a non-governmental organization representing women's rights, advocated for the expansion of gender sensitive budgeting and in 2003, sent a petition to the national assembly calling for policies that could facilitate gender sensitivity in all future government budgets and planning (ibid). Furthermore, on October 24, 2002, lawmakers in the Gender Equality Standing Committee of the National Assembly submitted a resolution that called for the implementation of gender sensitive budgeting. Female lawmakers who recognized the importance of this continued to lead the debate within the assembly so as to gain further support for the institutionalization of gender sensitive budgeting¹⁷ (Y.-h. Kim, 2011).

However, opponents of such governmental initiatives have argued that gender mainstreaming was, from the beginning, merely political rhetoric with an ambiguous meaning (Y. Kim & Ma, 2004). That is, following the Beijing World Conference on Women (1995), the terminologies of gender and gender mainstreaming had been used without any exact explanation. In fact, these terms were widely used among civil servants and lawmakers without ever being defined, even by governmental researchers (Han, Jang, Kim, & Huh, 2008; E.-S. Kim, 2008b; Ma, 2007). Moreover, during the field work interviews carried out for this thesis it transpired that, in the opinion of one governmental researcher, the notion of gender mainstreaming was not fully embedded among civil servants and politicians.

We could make the foundations for the discourse of gender equality in our society through the gender mainstream movement. However, it is doubtful whether we reached compliance with the discourse in the policy making process. It might have been too early to have those gender perspectives in our society, particularly when some male governmental bureaucrats were still not aware of gender sensitive policies.

(Interviewee 2, governmental researcher)

¹⁷ In January 2006, a gender sensitive budgeting special research task force team was formed within the Special Committee on Budget and Accounts and the amendment to the National Budget Act (presented by a female lawmaker, Sang-Jung Sim) that mandated the implementation of the gender budget was subsequently passed in October 2006 (Y.-h. Kim, 2011).

As Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2000) argued in the context of the European Union (EU), the acceptance and implementation of gender mainstreaming very much depended on the long-term transformation of the EU policy process so that this served the goal of equal opportunities between men and women and complied with the proposed policy frame as well as the dominant frame(s) of the existing institutions. This situation appears to have been similar in the Korean policy context because despite the implementation of the gender mainstreaming movement strategy as an official policy tool, it was apparent that the concept of women's traditional role as caretakers of the family was still dominant throughout politics at that time.

An example of this can be seen in the several changes of the name of the Ministry of Gender and Equality. Regarding the name, (see Table 6-1 below) it has been changed four times since the department was first established in 2001 under the name of the Ministry of Gender Equality, which was simply called the Ministry of Women in Korean. The name was changed to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in 2005, but was again actually called, in Korean, the Ministry of Women and Family, with the duties of family and childcare having been transferred to it in June 2004 from the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW). This transfer process is discussed later in this section. Then it was entitled the Ministry of Gender Equality in 2008 and this again¹⁸ was changed to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in 2010. There can be several reasons advanced for why these changes were made, but the key point is the instability regarding the name. With respect to the Korean terminology of the phrase 'gender equality', this may not have been a comfortable phrase for people, even policy makers to use and so the term 'women's policy' may have been adopted as being more acceptable. According to Kim and Ma (2004) the terminology surrounding the matter of gender equality in Korean politics is open to criticism and this reveals the underlying problem that gender equality still has a long way to go, in particular with regard to a widespread understanding of the differences in opportunities between men and women.

¹⁸ The change in February 2008 happened with the new administration under President Lee who came into power after President Roh. With this change in the name, the Lee government handed the duty of childcare back to the Ministry of Health and Welfare. My interview with one political appointee/academic consultant commented on this transfer saying that 'the concern about gender issues in caring work was reduced after this transfer under the Lee government'.

Table 6-1 The name changes of the Ministry of Gender and Equality

	English	Korean
Jan 2001	Ministry of Gender Equality Planning and compilation of women's policies, prevention and relief of gender discrimination	여성부 (Yeosungboo)
Jun 2005	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Dealt with women, family and infant care duties	여성가족부 (Yeosunggajokboo)
Feb 2008	Ministry of Gender Equality	여성부 (Yeosungboo)
Mar 2010	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family	여성가족부 (Yeosunggajokboo)

Source: The website of the Ministry, which is available from: http://english.mogef.go.kr/sub01/sub01_31.jsp [Accessed 27 June 2013]

Despite the fact that the gender mainstreaming movement was not entirely comprehended among politicians, this sensitivity towards gender might have contributed to bringing the issue of caring work to the public agenda (Huh, 2005; Ma, 2005). During the 1970s and 1980s, government interventions regarding caring work, especially childcare, stemmed from concerns about sustaining economic growth. The involvement of the state in childcare was primarily aimed to promote women's participation in the labour market and this was linked to the issue of looking after their children during the working day so that more women could be released to take up positions in the workforce (see Chapter 3). In the early 1990's, the interest in caring work as a women's issue was driven only by women's civil organisations such as Korean Women's Association United (KWAU) and Korean Women Workers Association (KWWA). Therefore, debates over sharing the responsibility for caring work had only been publicly voiced among feminist groups, who insisted that caring work should no longer be considered as a problem belonging just to women working in the home. In effect, they led the discourse asserting that there needed to be a transfer of caring work from the private sphere to the public (Huh, 2005; Y. Kim & Ma, 2004; Ma, 2005; Peng, 2009). In spite of this, the value of caring work in the home had been consistently ignored and hardly discussed at all as an issue on the public agenda. However, according to the interviews with one of the political appointees in the Blue House as an academic consultant, the gender mainstreaming movement motivated politicians to be more conscious of gender issues during the policy making process, and, at the same time, brought the matter of caring work into

the public arena under the umbrella of gender related discussions, rather than letting it remain perceived as a purely employment related problem. Referring to an interview carried out with an academic consultant in the Blue House, this revealed that the gender mainstreaming movement offered the chance to see caring work as a means of addressing some aspects of gender issues.

Of course, gender mainstreaming did not directly bring up the issue of socializing care, yet it apparently helped to build the initial idea about gender and care in the Korean government's mind. There is no doubt that the gender mainstreaming movement had been taken for granted over the ten years between the Kim government and the Roh's. We don't need to question this, because it was very obvious.

(Interviewee 1, academic consultant / political appointee)

As shown in the next quote, this interviewee explained that having entered the period of the Roh government, the influence of the gender mainstreaming movement became even stronger and was powerful with regard to care matters. The interviewee also emphasised the contribution that feminist groups achieved in terms of bringing the issue of care into the public field, although it had been only a minor concern before these two presidencies, and reveals that the state's intervention regarding childcare grew considerably under the Roh government. Although the matter had been considered during the times of the Kim government as seen in the establishment of some gender sensitive institutional settings (e.g. the MGE), by and large, its advocates such as the feminist movement had been working from a relatively weak position i.e. from the bottom up in terms of agenda setting. Therefore, there is no doubt in this interviewee's mind that the gender mainstreaming movement provided the fertile ground which brought concern about care into politics.

Actually, the discussion about 'gender mainstreaming' in public might have been more active in the Participatory government (Roh) rather than the People's government (Kim), although the terminology of the gender mainstream was spread by feminist groups and academia such as KWDI (Korean Women Development Institute) during Kim's government. We should know that feminist groups have contributed to raising the awareness of gender issues since the People's government and in particular the feminist movements have grown up along with NGOs' activation. However, the governmental awareness of gender mainstreaming was still not strong enough to raise the issue of

socialising care in the People's government, even in Roh government. Nevertheless, one certain thing is that the early awareness of gender issues during the Kim's government was the initial base to make it possible for the discourse of gender to mature in the Roh government.

(Interviewee 1, academic consultant / political appointee)

Having recognised the influence of the gender mainstreaming movement, the following subsection addresses another powerful discourse which forced the issue of childcare to feature as a main policy agenda issue, that is, the discourse of social investment by the state. This concept and the contribution of the discourse to politics in terms of the socialisation of care are discussed next.

6.1.2 The discourse of social investment by the state as political rhetoric: an external factor

The political rhetoric of social investment was newly introduced by the Roh administration, as the theoretical background to raising welfare expenditure. The terminology of the social investment state, was originally proposed in the work 'The Third Way' by Anthony Giddens in 1994 and was specifically applied into a child-centred social investment strategy in the work 'Why We Need a New Welfare State' by Gøsta Esping-Andersen in 2002. The term was often mixed with similar terms such as social investment strategy and social investment perspective, demonstrating that there was some ambiguity surrounding its precise meaning. However, for the current discussion, its significance concerns the justification of the expansion of social expenditure, rather than investigating the theoretical meaning of the words. Kim (Y.-s. Kim, 2007) expressed the view that usage of this term could be described as involving overstretching definitions, as many commentators appeared to be in a rush to apply this to the Korean welfare regime without fully understanding its meaning. Nevertheless, it appears that the discourse tended to follow that of the social investment states found in advanced European countries, but it remains debatable as to whether the Korean welfare regime was mature enough to provide all citizens with equality of opportunity and a system of stable income security to the extent found in some European systems.

The influence of the social investment discourse was such that agreement to raise social expenditure was reached with support even coming from the most conservative camps in government. Kim, J-G (2008) attributed the reasons for this popularity to three factors. Firstly, as outlined in Chapter 3, there was increased social need, implying that welfare expansion was required to address various new social risks brought about by the socio economic changes occurring after the 1990s. Secondly, welfare development had relied on productivism which emphasized workfare under the Kim government. These two reasons indicate that the institutional legacy, that is the national ideology and structural barriers which hinder or facilitate new policy directions concerning emergent ideas, showed some cogency between the discourse of social investment state and the Korean welfare regime. Lastly, the discourse of social investment was attractive even to conservative parties, who usually tended to be against the expansion of welfare expenditure, because this discourse promised economic growth through investment in human resources (ibid).

In particular, the discourse of social investment by the state was propagated by the MHW, particularly under the Minister Mr Ryu, Si-min. He held a joint symposium of a number of academic associations on social investment during February 2007 at which Professor Taylor-Gooby, an authority on the UK model of the social investment state, was invited to give a presentation regarding the possibility of incorporating this concept into the Korean welfare regime (Peter Taylor-Gooby, 2007). Professor Yeon-Myung who was a close aide to the minister regarding domestic social security systems highlighted the importance of both economic growth and social development. In order to achieve these he suggested that it was necessary for everyone in society to have equality of opportunity with respect to participation in the labour market. This would, in turn, ensure the prevention of poverty during their life course (Y.-M. Kim, 2007). These academic discussions eventually spread to the concept of child development with the emphasis being placed on long-term investment. With respect to this, the Child Development Account (CDA)¹⁹ introduced in 2007, was one example of initiatives instigated that

¹⁹ This account aims to support children who are in low income families or foster care, which will help them to stand on their own feet at a certain age. The savings fund given by the government and sponsors could be used only for education expenses, house rental loans and establishment of businesses. Available from: <https://www.adongcda.or.kr:444/main/main.php>. [Accessed 31 July 2013].

highlighted children as being the future workforce in the domestic labour market and pointed to the need to assist them by establishing their own bank savings account, containing a small sum given to each young child by the government (Y.-M. Kim, Choi, Nam, Lee, & Lee, 2007). This discourse of social investment state may be considered as triggering an emphasis on child development which raised the profile of family formation and parenting. Similarly the notion of work-life balance for carers and childcare services came to feature as areas that politicians were conscious of and more importantly, were aware that these were in need of attention.

With concerns being voiced regarding the potential future workforce in the labour market, the matter of encouraging women to enter the labour market was taken seriously by the Roh administration. Drawing on this aspect of the state undertaking social investment, some of the strategies adopted under this discourse appear linked to family friendly and even gender friendly policy. However, it is debatable as to whether these strategies under the discourse of social investment sought to address the fundamental structures which were obstructing women's participation in the labour market (Y.-s. Kim, 2007; M.-S. Woo, 2009). For instance, different conditions and situations between men and women in caring work as well as participating in the labour market could have been considered with a view to investigating gender relations in the family, as clearly argued in Chapter 2. For instance, affordability in providing care services which refers to the purchaser being able to afford the source of care he/she envisages availing him/herself of from the care market, could have received more rigorous attention. That is, the discourse of social investment which had become current, repeatedly emphasized the potential value of women's greater involvement in the workforce and the importance of work-life balance, but the matter of women's social citizenship in the structure of welfare provision was not dealt with (ibid). The interview held with one of the committee chairpersons in the Blue House asserted critically that the government did not have sufficient time to examine the concept of the social investment strategy regarding the welfare regime.

I would say that actually, the assertion of social investment state was due to collaboration by the minister in the Ministry of Health and Welfare, Mr Ryu and the Prof Kim, who worked with the minister as an academic advisor. It is true that there has been sharp critique of this discourse, saying that it is the transformation of neoliberalism in a social

democratic way, also some criticizing referring to the point that the concept of redistribution under the social investment state is a separate and different view from that held by advocates of people who hold a truly progressive position. Rather, there was no gender sensitive consideration in the discourse once they started to discuss it within the government.

(Interviewee 1, academic consultant / political appointee)

According to the comments of another informant, interviewee 2, a governmental researcher, the discourse of the social investment state in South Korea contributed to bringing the paradigm shift which accepted that welfare expansion could be an investment. Moreover, one of the governmental reports issued during the Roh Presidency and published by the Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee entitled: *The Safe Infrastructure for supporting Childcare: policy effort to reinforce the socialisation of childcare*, stated that childcare policy was based on the recognition of child wellbeing as a form of long term investment in children and women (The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee., 2007, pp. 5-8). Although it cannot be concluded that social investment state discourse had directly stimulated the rise in government spending on children, in fact, the budget for childcare rose substantially during this time (see Table 5-1 in Chapter 5). This expansion of the budget has been often justified in theory by reference to the discourse, with government publications citing the key ‘buzz’ phrase: ‘fostering our future workforce and excellent children’ (Daehanmingukjungboo, 2008; MOGEF, 2006; PCAFS, 2004; The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee., 2007). The combining in one slogan of the two issues has fostered social consensus around the link between work-life balance and the issue of public childcare provision. From one point of view, it can be accepted that the underlying discourse could have introduced the basic ideas, those of equal opportunity and the notion of the need for investment in children and women as potential future human resources. However, the discourse faced a critical limitation in that it did not allow space for the challenging of fundamental structural barriers which were obstructing progress being made in achieving equality of opportunities between different social classes and the genders in the Korean context (Y.-s. Kim, 2007; M.-S. Woo, 2009).

6.1.3 Transforming welfare provision in South Korea: an internal factor

Apart from the influences exerted by the gender mainstreaming and state social investment discourses over the political atmosphere, welfare provision itself has been transformed since the early 2000s (Ahn & Lee, 2005; Gough, 2004; Y. M. Kim, 2008; H. Kwon, 2005). With respect to this, the economy had to endure constraints put in place by the IMF to deal with the economic crisis in 1998 and Korean society in general since the late 1990s has been confronted with a polarised labour market structure, an increased dependency ratio and index of ageing, as well as a low fertility rate. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 3, a breakdown of the traditional family structure had weakened the role of the family, which used to be regarded as the main safety net for financial security and care of individuals. Therefore, these socio economic changes in Korean society had an impact on increasing the need for state intervention regarding people's well-being. Regarding state intervention, there has been vigorous academic discussion assessing whether the role of the government was expanded, retrenched or even restructured. These discussions were particularly focused on the Kim government period and many were included in the publication: 'The Debate on the Characteristics of the Korean Welfare Regime' (Y.-M. Kim, 2010). Although commentators did not agree on the nature and implications of these developments, the very range of opinions that exists suggests that the welfare state was undergoing intensive fluctuations during this time. Perhaps this transforming of welfare provision around this time also contributed to the rise in interest regarding childcare issues in politics.

In sum, this section described the policy factors which laid down the national mood that was open towards the socialisation of care having a position on the policy agenda. Firstly, the gender mainstreaming movement contributed to bringing the issue of gender awareness into politics and it can be considered as the major influence which brought the issue of care to the public political table, rather than letting it remain as a private issue. Secondly, the discourse of social investment by the state activated the emphasis placed on childcare by highlighting the value of children as an investment for the future and the possibility of using more women in the labour force through the instigation of a more appropriate work-life balance for them. Finally, domestic welfare provision has fluctuated in terms of state

intervention owing to the economic crisis of 1998 and the many socio economic changes that have happened since. I have contended that these policy factors fostered the national mood as being fertile ground willing to accept the policy of the socialisation of care. This issue has entered smoothly into Korean politics and assumed its place on the policy agenda.

6.2 Policy actors

Against the backdrop of these external and internal factors, this section probes the key policy actors who were deeply involved with the reform of childcare policy. Below, the relevant policy actors are classified into three groups: government, public interest and self-interest groups. Public interest groups are often discussed as counterpoints to self-interest groups in the business world (Kingdon, 1995) but entrepreneurs and their advocates have been categorised as a private interest group in this research. As discussed above, the period of Kim's presidency (1998-2002) can be identified as fertile ground which offered a gender friendly political environment for the gender mainstreaming movement. Kim's administration was willing to adopt this stance and in 1998 established 'the Presidential Commission on Women's Affairs' which was tasked with planning and compiling women's policies. This body was initially not substantial in size, but the number of staff was increased by July 1999 following the enactment of the Gender Discrimination Prevention and Relief Act in July 1997. It assumed duties regarding overseeing childcare matters and then subsequently took the name of the MGE which then became the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) in June 2005, which had responsibilities for women's issues and the family during the Roh government's term in office.

The following analysis investigates how the intensity of political attention that was focused on the issues of care and gender became stronger under these two governments. Moreover, it underlines how the Roh government had inherited these issues and went on to trigger reforms regarding childcare. Identifying the actors and groups involved with the relevant decision making processes and policy development is tied to the issues and problems considered. By focusing on the transfer of childcare between the two ministries the researcher can observe the key policy actors who

were deeply engaged in the childcare policy reform in South Korea. Further, it can shed light on what kind of policy interests they had and, in so doing, draw the bigger picture of the relations pertaining to each policy actor, including their alliances and conflicts.

6.2.1 The Government as a key policy actor: President Roh's individual will and the shaping of the Ministry of Gender Equality

During Roh and Kim's terms in office, a series of action plans to implement gender policies was instituted, namely, the 1st and 2nd Basic Plans on Women's Policies, with their application periods lasting from 1998 to 2002 and from 2003 to 2007 respectively. Most of the policy tasks included in the 1st Basic Plan were imbued with the call for women's political, economic and social empowerment that had been outlined in the Beijing Platform of Action (1995). The 2nd Basic Plan incorporated the gender mainstreaming perspective more explicitly as it specifically included integration of a gender equal perspective into policy making as one of its ten major policy undertakings and from this point onwards, the development of the technical tools necessary for achieving gender mainstreaming began in earnest in the Korean policy context (K. Kim, 2008). When the concept of gender mainstreaming was first introduced, it took some time for lawyers, bureaucrats and researchers to grasp this new concept before they could put it into practice and although the notion was not fully absorbed into politics (see above), the government tried to embrace it as a novel instrument for transforming the policy making process.

It is of note that under the Korean model of gender mainstreaming practice, the main focus was placed on carrying out the instrumental tasks of gender impact assessments, gender sensitive budget initiatives and gender awareness training. However, those were often faced with cynical responses expressed by male bureaucrats within the government. One of the political appointees in the Blue House reported that although the policy instruments were obviously driven by the gender mainstreaming movement, the emphasis placed on the issue of gender was often ignored by men who often denied any comprehension of the matter, challenging her bluntly with comments such as: 'what are you talking about?' or 'I cannot understand at all what you are going on about'. Similarly, one governmental researcher shared

the view that whilst the Roh government was instigating policy changes consistent with an awareness of gender, such as the gender impact assessments, there was actually little compliance among many politicians. Nevertheless, during these two presidencies, much effort was devoted to refining technical tools to serve as the key ingredients of gender mainstreaming, under the initiative of the lead agency, i.e. the ministry.

When appointed President Roh reshuffled the cabinet in a noticeably radical way and his commitment to running his administration in a novel way soon became evident. For instance, among the 34 appointees to secretarial posts, only two had any prior experience in government. More than half of the rest, aged in their 30s and 40s, were former student activists who had led demonstrations against the military-led regimes during the 1970s and 1980s (J. K.-c. Oh, 2005). In addition, a fair number of female politicians were appointed, which was a completely new departure from previous governments. To begin with, President Roh appointed Mrs Myeong-Sook Han as Prime Minister. She had worked for women's empowerment and rights, especially for marginalised women, in feminist activist groups such as the 'Korean Women-link'²⁰ and 'Korean Women Association United'²¹ (KWAU) and had previously served under President Kim as the first minister in the MGE (29 January 2001 to 26 February 2003). Another woman, Mrs Gum-Sil Kang was elected as the minister in the Ministry of Justice. She had worked as an NGO lawyer protecting basic human rights and attaining social justice for minority groups. Most daily newspapers, at that time, reported her appointment as being a 'sensational and a ground-breaking initiation' with comments²² that remarked on the fact that she was the first female minister in the Ministry of Justice and the youngest to date. Under Minister Mrs Hwa-jung Kim in the MHW, there were a number of female chairpersons of committees appointed, including Professor Hye-kyoung Lee to the Presidential Committee on Social Inclusion which was one of the presidential advisory bodies and in addition, some women bureaucrats were chosen for some newly created

²⁰ Korean Women-link is a voluntary women's organisation which was established in 1987 and aims to educate people on gender equality, sexual harassment and sexual violence and so on

Available from <http://www.womenlink.or.kr/> [Accessed 5 August 2013].

²¹ It is introduced in the next section in this chapter (see 6.2.2)

²² Available from <http://www.sisapress.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=55287> [Accessed 5 August 2013]

secretarial posts. It cannot be concluded that simply by having more women in politics, and particularly in important roles in government, the profile and number of gender issues addressed would necessarily increase. However, I propose that these appointments within the cabinet helped the government to be relatively open-minded towards gender matters as compared to the situation under previous administrations. In fact, the interview with the former minister in the MGE demonstrates that the higher numbers of female politicians had contributed to the active public discussion of diverse gender issues, and in so doing, they helped to bring these to register at the centre of the policy agenda.

I was quite lucky to be with other female politicians in my ministerial period. For example, the Prime minister, Mrs Han, the two ministers, Mrs Kang in Justice and Mrs Kim in the Ministry of Health and Welfare and some female bureaucrats as well. Surprisingly, there were some female members in the Cabinet as well, who had feminist perspectives. That was not all. In the National Assembly too, you know. I reckon there were a fair number of female members in the Congress. I think these environments worked with me very well, especially to bring the issue of caring work into the public arena. They were actually willing to discuss this and never asked why it was important, which is a surprise, as male politicians often do.

(Interviewee 6, the first minister)

The comments given in another interview with a Blue House civil servant support this perspective. She identified the female appointees as ‘femocrats’ and emphasized their role in the government, as below:

It is quite important to know who does politics and what kind of perspectives they have. Even in Korean politics, in fact, there were ‘femocrats’ around at the end of the Kim Presidency and then they continued in their roles until the Participatory government, the Roh administration. For example, the Prime Minister, Mrs Han, the minister Mrs Ji in the Ministry of Gender Equality, the minister Mrs Kang in Justice, Professor Lee in the Presidential Committee on Social Inclusion and the other female bureaucrats A, B, C and so on. They were the ‘femocrats’ I could pinpoint.

(Interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee)

Within this gender sensitive policy making environment, it was not a casual move to determine that childcare was going to be taken up by the MGE. That is, the decision to take this responsibility away from the MHW can be termed a critical juncture (S.-j. Lee, 2011; The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee., 2007) in the overall narrative of introducing gender issues into politics. A key belief underlying this decision was the view that caring work, especially that for children, needed to be approached by taking into account the woman's perspective, women being the main carers in the home (The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee., 2007). As shown above, the roles of the femocrats in government were significant in bringing this perspective about. Moreover, the personal commitment of the President to reforming childcare featured as one of the election pledges made during the presidential campaign and President Roh publicly swore to uphold the pledge, declaring that 'Once you give birth, the Government will strongly support all childcare' (Congratulatory address given in the Women's Week Celebration, 4th July 2003). This presidential promise was directly connected to addressing the policy agenda of childcare as a national task, and thus demonstrates the intention to share responsibility for childcare between the family and the state. Moreover, this emphasised how determined he was to achieve its transfer to the MGE, as revealed in the interview with a senior civil servant within the MGE:

I had no any doubt saying that the transfer was achieved by the Roh President's strong will. As long as the President kept saying that the duty should be transferred to the MGE, who could have been against him?

(Interviewee 7, senior civil servant)

This decision to transfer responsibility for childcare was also actively driven by appraisals criticising that while it had been within the MHW it had been administered without any specific policy direction since the passing of the Childcare Act of 1991. In confirmation of this point, one interviewee (interviewee 3, academic consultant / professor) commented that there had been little discussion of how to improve the service quality except by increasing the number of private childcare facilities during the Kim Young-Sam government era (also see Chapter 3 section 3.3). Moreover, the proportion of the total budget available for the ministry to allocate for childcare had historically been fairly small compared to its other welfare spending, such as that for

national pensions or health insurance. Further, childcare provision was only available to low income families without sufficient resources to look after their own children whilst the parents were working (Yoo, 2002). The service was, therefore, not universal. Thus, it is little wonder that the matter of childcare was not taken as a priority within the MHW as, according to interviewee 4, they also had to manage major social security systems such as those for national pensions, health insurance and employment. Similarly, interviewee 7, a senior civil servant who had worked for the department of childcare in the MHW summed up the lowly status of the work:

The task of childcare used to be regarded as a very trivial business within the MHW, and it was not popular at all. No one wanted to have this job in their role, because of the fairly little budget and even less political attention. All the documents relating to this job were always put at the bottom of the pile in their in-tray.

(Interviewee 7, senior civil servant)

In fact, once responsibility for the area was transferred to the MGE, it became a substantial task, not least because the staff in the ministry raised hitherto unspoken queries regarding why childcare should be considered as a women's problem and how it could be instrumental in encouraging a sustainable work-life balance. One of the interviewees confessed 'I still don't understand the differences between understanding childcare itself and considering it with a gender perspective. From my view, they are the same. Aren't they?' (interviewee 10, academic consultant / NGO group leader / professor). From such developments, it appears that President Roh strongly believed that the issue of childcare should be resolved in ways that considered both women's career demands and their responsibilities as carers. One respondent, a senior civil servant, gave testimony that Mr Roh studied the diverse debates around care and gender, and another the minister said he had been willing to take on board the arguments made by feminists and advocates of change located in the progressive camp (interviewees 7 and 6). Likewise, one of the senior governmental researchers revealed in the interview that 'the President Roh strongly convinced himself that the issue of childcare needed to be resolved as a women's issue'. This appreciation of the relation between caring work and women's issues appears to have prompted the President's decision to transfer childcare between the

MHW (Ministry of Health and Welfare) and MGE (Ministry of Gender and Equality), as soon as he came into power. He publicly announced that childcare should be a more urgent and significant issue for working mums than any other matter (The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee., 2007). Clearly, this achievement of the transfer emphasised the issue of women as vital in relation to the business of childcare, as revealed in the interview with an academic consultant in the Blue House. She said that for her,

There is no doubt that the Roh administration was the touchstone which has achieved a gender orientated regime in approaching the issue of childcare with a strong gender perspective by transferring the duty of childcare from the MHW to the MGE.

(Interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee)

6.2.2 Public interest groups as key policy actors: academia and two civil groups – the Korea Women’s Association United and the People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy

Facilitating the decision to transfer the responsibility for childcare to the MGE was arduous owing to bitter opposition from social welfare professions which included practitioners in social welfare and scholars from the academic community who reacted strongly against this decision. Together they organized protests in front of the national assembly to object to the transfer of childcare responsibility from the MHW to the MGE (interviewee 7 and 10, senior civil servant, NGO group leader, respectively). One of these informants, a senior civil servant, described the situation at that time as their ‘being surrounded by enemies on all sides’. In fact, their response was not so surprising considering that up until that time, the main work of social welfare professionals, including childcare professionals, had been handled by the MHW and they did not want it to be handed over to the MGE. The social welfare interest group plausibly claimed that childcare policy needed to be approached with children’s well-being and development as the priority rather than women and gender matters being put to the fore (interviewee 10, NGO group leader). He added that ‘there was no matter of gender in understanding childcare, even in the civil organisation PSPD (People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy) that was representing the professionals at that time’. A professor in the department of social

welfare at E-hwa University was strongly against the governmental decision and wrote an article that was published in one of the main daily newspapers, *'Dong-A Ilbo'* (4 April 2003) arguing that it would cause confusion between the two ministries if the duty were to be moved. Moreover, he argued convincingly that issues of childcare should be considered as the first priority instead of being considered as one of many themes under the broader heading of women's issues²³.

The issue of the transfer of childcare away from the MHW was a concern to one particular civil organisation, the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (henceforth the PSPD). The insistence that child wellbeing should be prioritised was shared by this civil group. The PSPD was founded in 1994 by activists, scholars and lawyers who had engaged in various democratic movements during the decades of the military dictatorship (the webpage of the PSPD²⁴). To date, they have been working on promoting people's participation in governmental decision making processes and socio economic reforms, as well as on strengthening social security and securing minimum living standards. This civil organisation apparently could not help but take up the role of advocating on behalf of the social welfare professionals and the scholars who were opposed to the transfer (interviewee 10, NGO group leader). It transpired that the PSPD's subcommittee which dealt with general affairs of social welfare, their 'Social Welfare Committee', had been working in support of social workers in the field and most of the committee members were professors in relevant university departments.

²³ The article was titled with 'The five reasons for being against the decision of the transfer'. The professor set out five reasons which are summarised as follows. Firstly, the MHW is for the national well-being whereas the MGE is for women's empowerment. Therefore, the MGE would try to resolve the issue of childcare just for improving women's social participation. Secondly, if the transfer happened, who would care for the elderly? In his opinion all service delivery should be comprehensive. Thirdly, if the transfer happened, there would be confusion in delivering social services between the MHW and the MGE. For example, who would have responsibility for disabled children? The professor was convinced the situation would end up as a complete buck-passing game. Fifth, the situation would probably occur again when the administration was changed. Moreover, the academic proposed nothing should happen until holding a national public survey rather than it being driven forward by the Roh government'

²⁴ Available from: <http://www.peoplepower21.org/about/sub.php?sub=m21>[Accessed 29 June 2013]

It might therefore be taken for granted that this civil organisation would take up the fight on behalf of social welfare workers and scholars, given the PSPD's background and its membership, but it appears that, in the end, regarding the transfer, its position was rather unclear. On the wider matter of childcare, the PSPD had been working with the Korean Women Association United (the KWAU) which was in favour of the governmental decision on the transfer. Often, both these organisations tended to share opinions regarding childcare policy directions, announcing similar statements. However, at around the time of the governmental decision, when statements by the KWAU which advocated for the transfer were made public, the group leader of PSPD admitted that 'the name of the PSPD was dropped from the list of its supporters'. One of the committee members of the PSPD explained the position of the organisation at that time as follows;

Actually, we had a discussion about whether we in the PSPD necessarily needed to get involved with childcare policy as well, as we were in the situation where we had been intervening with all sorts of social welfare issues such as the national pension and health insurance. With this internal discussion, we had been quite sceptical about being involved with the childcare issue around at that time and decided we would rather support other organizations which worked on childcare issues, if there were any. Within this internal decision, we found that the KWAU (Korean Women's Association United) and the KCTA (Korean Childcare Teachers Associations) were very expert in this area of childcare. To be honest, we internally had decided to support these two associations, instead of doing something on childcare issues by ourselves.

(Interviewee 10, NGO group leader)

The KWAU is a long standing representative NGOs for women's rights and empowerment in South Korea. This organization was created to deal with gender equality, care for the well-being of women, and with other issues involving women in society. The KWAU has been working for a variety of different causes, such as better methods of childcare, laws against domestic abuse, and maternal and parental leave, it being a progressive civil group which advocated for women's interests and legal rights. They have been very active in monitoring and developing progressive childcare policy and have constantly argued that the issue of childcare should not be separated from issues of the family and the nature of caring work as this is mainly undertaken by women in the home (interviewee 4, women's group organisation

leader). The interviewee from the women's group explained that 'the KWAU aims to stand for women's working rights so that the socialisation of care could not be more important than from this point of view'. With regard to the transfer of childcare out of the remit of the MHW, they had argued that the duty of childcare had to be given to the MGE when this was first established under Kim's government in around 2001. When the issue of the transfer became a public debate, they reiterated how the policy setting for childcare matters was closely related to women's situations in the labour market and the improvement of gender equality. With this perspective on childcare issues, the KWAU was a significant critic of the ways in which the MHW had dealt with childcare policy. In fact, one of their main points of contention was that the MHW focused only on the suppliers providing childcare services in the market place whereas they argued that the services should, in fact, be centred on the needs of service users (Namyoong In-soon., 2005).

Given the stance of the KWAU, the PSPD members must have been somewhat hesitant to express their collective organisational opinion as they were in an awkward position because although the points made by the KWAU appeared reasonable, they were still obliged to represent the social welfare professionals' views. Indeed, the interview with a member of the PSPD showed this and he reported that the PSPD could not find a consensus regarding whether they should agree with the governmental decision and struggled to find reasons why they should support it.

Actually we, the PSPD had limited time to think about whether we should work on the current issue of childcare, and we potentially decided not to be much involved with the issue of childcare. It seems that at the end we realised that the KWAU knows much more about childcare than we do and we agreed to support them from behind rather than taking a front seat.

(Interviewee 10, academic consultant / NGO group leader, professor)

As mentioned earlier, the PSPD and KWAU tended to share similar opinions over government actions especially those on childcare issues. That is, the PSPD had been inclined to be on the side of the KWAU. However, regarding this issue of the transfer, the PSPD had struggled with finding their own voice. The interviewee from the PSPD revealed that they decided to have their name dropped from the KWAU

statement on the issue of transfer and then, instead, they complained that the decision had been taken by the government unilaterally. They expressed their anger at this unilateral action, and even with the minister of the MHW who carried it out. The statement by the PSPD shows their anger:

We are unclear about what the transfer of the childcare duty from the MHW to the MGE will contribute to the current affairs on the childcare issue we have at this time. We also must ask the government why the decision had to be taken unilaterally without enough discussion to gather social consensus.

(Statements by the PSPD, 1st Apr 2003)

The understanding of children's well-being and comprehension of child development were considered as the main principle among the social welfare groups, whilst concerns about parents' work-life balance and the extant imbalance in gender relations in caring work were strongly voiced by women's groups, particularly the KWAU at this time. These conflicting focuses placed on childcare policy eventually drove a split between the two groups, i.e. the group advocating for social welfare profession and their counterparts representing women. This divide was even felt in academia between the disciplines of social welfare and women's studies. Within this situation, the PSPD's position appears to be ambiguous regarding whether they were on the side of either the social welfare or the women's groups. In fact, the concern that they finally chose to voice in public statements was based on the argument that the decision for the transfer should have been through a full democratic procedure involving different opinions collected from many relevant parties.

This allegation of unilateral decision making calls in to doubt whether President Roh did listen to the diverse voices about childcare policy. However, according to an interview with a senior civil servant who worked on childcare policy within the government, a thoughtful approach best describes President Roh's gathering of opinions. She emphasized that Mr Roh tried his best to elicit different information from the field of practical childcare and academia and, on the basis of his awareness both of real life childcare provision and theoretical knowledge, he decided to make the transfer. She added that 'I think these learning processes might have led the

President to firmly convince himself of the decision of the transfer' (interviewee 7, senior civil servant). Moreover, the interview with one of the academic consultants from the field of social welfare reveals that President Roh was very keen on hearing as many opinions as possible. This respondent was very impressed by the President's enthusiasm regarding learning about social problems and affairs through arranging seminars with outside experts invited to the Blue House. Moreover, she was deeply moved by his endless questioning of the experts, including herself (interviewee 4, academic consultant / professor). She recalled 'I still remember that whenever I did a presentation on policy research in the Blue House, President Roh was always sitting at the back, very quietly thinking and at the end of my session asked me lots of questions'.

6.2.3 Private interest groups: The Korea Edu-Care Association (KECA) and the Korean Private Nursery Education Association (KPNEA)

Regarding the field in which childcare services are provided and carried out, there were various societies related to nursery education and two have been particularly active in South Korea. Two of interest to this research are the Korea Edu-Care Association (henceforth the KECA), organized by providers of public and national childcare facilities and the Korea Private Nursery Education Association (henceforth the KPNEA), which was formed by the owners of private childcare facilities. The governmental trial to test run the idea of the transfer of the duty for childcare from the MHW to the MGE resulted in serious conflict emerging between these two associations. Previously, when the duty was managed by the MHW, the KECA members (i.e. public sector providers) were supported by central and local governmental subsidies which were used to cover their operational costs, including paying for care workers' salaries. In contrast, there had been little money for the KPNEA members (i.e. private sector providers), since the MHW had followed a certain policy that prohibited this, thus illustrating central governmental support was only for public and national facilities (MHW, 2004²⁵). However, the MHW did announce that in special circumstances, they would support some private day-care centres but only when the private centres accommodated children from families that were below a minimal income threshold (ibid). This served to cut the waiting lists of

²⁵ Childcare Guideline for 2004, MHW, 2004

poorer families who were often left waiting, trying to register their children at the more popular public facilities. Obviously, this additional clause did not provide any comfort to those private owners who remained excluded from receiving governmental aid. Moreover, children from low income families were prioritised when applying to attend public facilities and in fact these families, as well as many others not classified as being on low income, preferred their children to attend publicly run provision as it offered a better quality of service with lower service cost (MOGEF, 2006²⁶).

As indicated by one of the interviewees, resolving this unequal treatment by the government regarding the subsidy, meant the KPNEA was very keen on being placed under the MGE, when the transfer was up for discussion within the government (interviewee 7, senior civil servant). She explained the reason for this was because ‘the KPNEA was poorly treated by the MHW while they were under the MHW’. Regarding this, their stance may be explained in light of the structure of the early years care market which had been dominated by private sector providers with almost 90% of the total number facilities belonging to them. This very large proportion was down to the national infrastructure of childcare services relying heavily on private owners (see Chapter 3). As noted in Chapter 3, this has emerged because the rise in women’s participation in the workforce had stimulated incremental growth in the social need for childcare services, and, in response to this, the government had encouraged private owners to build childcare facilities financed with loans from the government given at low interest rates. However, after these initial loans, the private owners discovered that, unfortunately, the government was unwilling to support them any further. In addition, the private childcare centres’ owners complained that they were not going to receive all the benefits that they had been led to expect when they had been encouraged by the government to establish their facilities. In rural areas they argued that their situation had become critical because there was scarcely sufficient demand from parents as to make it worthwhile to engage in the market. These points of dissatisfaction with the actions of the MHW meant that many private providers believed that the ministry did not care about their interests in spite of the

²⁶ Sae-ssak Plan: Mid-long Term Plan, MOGEF, 2006.6

fact that they ran the major proportion of facilities across the country. Their anger at the MHW was revealed well in one of their statements saying that ‘the government should have a responsibility not to make any discrimination based on the types of facilities’ (11th June 2003, KPNEA). Given this antagonism, it is to be anticipated that the private providers’ representative association was pleased to hear that the Roh government intended to transfer the duty for the administration of childcare services over to the MGE and also promised to treat all types of facilities equally. The interview with a senior civil servant described the conflict between the KPNEA and the MHW during the period when it was responsible for childcare:

The private association (KPNEA) must have been upset about what MHW had done for them so far. At the beginning, when the government needed to build childcare facilities in the late 1980s, the government encouraged them to build and the government borrowed the money from the National Pension Fund. Then the number of childcare facilities dramatically increased and they (the private providers) were over the moon, imagining that they would get golden eggs within a short time. However, they must have felt that they were then abandoned by the MHW and must have been quite upset about the governmental unfairness in the way they were treated.

(Interviewee 7, senior civil servant)

In contrast the public association, the Korea Edu-Care Association (KECA) was against the decision regarding the transfer proposed by the Roh government. Another comment from this senior servant shows that they were truly worried that the subsidy for public childcare centres which they obtained from the government could be reduced and their preferential treatment by the government might be lost (interviewee 7, senior civil servant). She simply explained the reason for this, ‘Of course they cannot be happy about this, because the size of the pie they get to share from the MHW will be reduced. Won’t it?’ The governmental decision to transfer the duty therefore brought about conflict between the KECA and the government, and possibly worsened the relation between the KECA and the private association KPNEA. According to the interview with her, these two childcare facilities associations could be described as the ‘prominent range of mountains in the Korean care market, being staked out against each other as competitors wanting to have more children registered. The root cause of this competitive relationship started from the

differentiated governmental subsidy which was only given to the public ones'. One of the ministerial secretaries, in post at the MGE at the same time as the senior civil servant mentioned above, who was delegated to handle this matter, described the situation as follows:

When I was ordered to carry out this transfer, I found that the field of childcare was like 'the Warring Country period' in Chinese history. Myself and the Minister Ji, discovered that we had to walk a tightrope, even perform aerial acrobatics, for example, concerning how to persuade the KECA to feel happy about the transfer and even the KPNEA. We still needed to find a solution regarding how to make them happy about us. Actually, we knew that KPNEA must be delighted with the news of the transfer, since they regarded themselves as having been abandoned by the MHW throughout previous governments. However, we still had to find an incentive for them, for example, what would be advantageous for them, once the duty was moved over to us. During the debate, we wanted to have hearings for gathering ideas to put on the agenda. However, although we found that the KPNEA was willing to come to find out information or to say their opinions, the KECA was not collaborative with us at all. It seemed that they were afraid that the pie allocated within the MHW would be further reduced, once the duty was moved to the Ministry of Gender Equality.

(Interviewee 7, senior civil servant)

Nevertheless, President Roh was immovable and determined to carry on and eventually drove forward the transfer, as shown below:

As long as there exists a Ministry of Gender Equality, we have to encourage women working in the labour markets. This is the first requirement, and the second is that encouraging women working leads to potential economic growth and this is a new strategy for the economy. Therefore, the issue of childcare should relate to the strategy for women's social participation. Because of this, I let the Ministry of Gender Equality have the duty of childcare.

(The 14th Cabinet meeting on 25th March 2003, cited in The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee, 2007, p. 32)

The interview with the civil servant reveals the extent to which President Roh was determined to achieve this transfer during his term in office:

I became aware that the transfer might not be possible. It was like we had been surrounded by enemies on all sides. However, Mr Roh made it happen in the end, although there were diverse debates on the transfer. I think it would not have happened if there was no Mr Roh.

(Interviewee 7, senior civil servant)

This section has illustrated the views of key policy actors involved when the Roh government decided to transfer responsibility for childcare from the MHW to the MGE. This political event can be considered as a critical juncture which prompted fundamental changes in understanding the issue of childcare, that is, it took on a gender perspective (interviewees 3, 10 and 11). Among these informants, interviewee 10, a NGO group leader/academic consultant, described the fundamental changes commenting:

I could feel that the people within the MGE seemed to have experienced caring work themselves and at least they knew themselves about the difficulty of being a mum and at the same time a worker in the labour market. It was quite a different feeling when I had met people from the MHW who tended to understand the issue of childcare as a residual and selective approach for children from low income families.

(Interviewee 10, academic consultant / NGO group leader / professor)

In sum, under the administration by the MHW, the matter of childcare was focussed on the children of low income families. As a result of its transfer to the MGE, there was a broader approach to understanding the childcare service, as in particular, women's issues were brought into the discussion and the agenda was viewed through a gender sensitive lens. The next section identifies the policy problems which were considered during the time the Roh government was bringing childcare issues into the political arena.

6.3 Policy problems facing the government

In order to investigate decision processes with a gender sensitive perspective, it is necessary to consider the way issues were being dealt with, bearing in mind the strong power of the President and the efforts of femocrats to move the childcare

agenda forward as well as the various lobbying groups which were also active in these processes. Moreover, the policy making process carried out by the government took place against the backdrop of the social issues that were pressing and required attention. In Chapter 3, the nature of the social problems and rapid social changes that brought many of these risks to bear down on Korean society were outlined. From these, the problem of the declining fertility rate has emerged as being a key driver that stimulated political concerns. Below, the problem of the very low fertility rate that South Korea was experiencing at the time sets the scene for the discussion of the issue of childcare emerging as a priority in terms of national tasks during the Roh administration.

As illustrated in Chapter 3 (see section 3.2), during the late 1990s society underwent dramatic changes regarding the nature of the family, with increased numbers of females as head of households and reduced family size as well as increased female work participation and polarised working conditions and status between genders. This section discusses these policy problems which have been considered as part of the wider childcare issue. The coding developed during the data analysis (see Chapter 4) highlighted two aspects, firstly the changes in the patterns of family formation and secondly, the changes in the patterns of paid employment. These are used to shape the following discussion.

6.3.1 Changes in patterns of family formation

With the issue of reforming childcare as an agenda, the first consideration for the Roh government was the weakening function of the family in providing care, which up to that time, had been taken for granted (MOGEF, 2006). As discussed in Chapter 3, since the 1990s, the family had been transforming and becoming nuclear in form and there was an increase in households led by females. Such changes in family forms underlined the weakening of the role of the family unit as carer of individual members. The burden of care, particularly regarding children, was cited as a key reason by some women for not having a baby, with care costs and difficulty in achieving a sustainable work-life balance being their main concerns. Moreover, the weakening family role in caring was consistently given as the fundamental social problem behind attempts to deal with the issue of low fertility rates. In fact, the

demographic trends of low fertility rates and the ageing of the population had been recognised from the early 1980s, but were not considered worthy of much attention at that time. However, as discussed above in this chapter, President Roh declared childcare to be a policy priority which demanded urgent intervention during his administration and his election pledges conveyed this message (The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee., 2007).

The Roh government passed legislation entitled: ‘Fertility and the Ageing Society’ in June 2005 and established a committee of academic experts and civil servants to mediate the problems of low fertility rates and the ageing population entitled: ‘the Committee on Low Fertility and the Ageing Society’ in September of the same year. This committee conducted research into the reasons why women tended to have fewer or even no children. They discovered that the pattern of fertility had changed, which meant that the women in the age group 25 to 29 years contributed to low fertility rates occurring between the years 1990 and 2000, whereas the group aged 20 to 24 had been associated with this in the 1980s. These findings indicated that women, especially well-educated and professional ones, tended to delay having a baby or had fewer children, compared to other groups of women. Moreover, the fertility rates of women living in urban areas were lower than for those in rural areas because of the high living costs experienced in cities (T.-h. Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2005). These results helped the government develop an awareness of the impact of different policy interventions on various demographic groups of women, particularly regarding the problem of low fertility because the research had indicated strongly differentiated fertility rates between different groups, particularly between professional and unskilled women (T.-h. Kim et al., 2005).

In light of the work of the committee, a question arises as to why the low fertility rate became a prime concern at that time and why it was considered as an important issue during the Roh era, given that the problem of low fertility rates had been known about since the 1980s (Byun, 2000). Further, it is intriguing as to why the Roh government was apparently so very concerned. An interview with one of the political appointees in the Blue House reveals that the political interest in the low fertility rate was not, in fact, directly focussed on the decreasing numbers of children being born,

but rather what this would mean in terms of workers participating in the labour markets in future years (interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee). She firmly argued that:

Actually the issue of low fertility already existed in Korean society... since the early 1980s, but what the Roh government did with this issue was that he set the issue of low fertility as a policy agenda, which has led to the state's intervention into childcare being fully justified. This was the different characteristic of the Roh government which can be distinguished from previous governments when dealing with the issue of low fertility.

(Interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee)

It was the Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society²⁷ that announced the first plan regarding childcare policy entitled: 'The First Plan of Childcare Support for Fostering Future Workforces and Female Working Participation' (PCAFS, 2004). In sum, the warnings regarding the impacts of low fertility rates were linked with the problem of the ageing society. Moreover, these issues were informed by the growing governmental comprehension of the fact that the family was no longer serving as a unit to provide care to people when they were in most need, i.e. when they were young, old or sick.

Having identified these issues, the Roh government had to find a way to make a relative increase in the number of people who were capable of participating in the labour market (interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee). Regarding this, the crisis of the low fertility rate brought agreement, even with some conservative social groups (interviewee 14, the second MGE minister), about how to resolve the problem by turning to the concept of the social investment state, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The interest in childcare was strong enough to bring it to the policy agenda in terms of ensuring a robust economic future through investment in key domestic resources i.e. future workforce participants (see section

²⁷ This organisation was established in October in 2003 as the presidential advisory panel which aims to predict future socio economic changes and to improve people's lives as well as develop state capacity. Later on, it was reorganised taking the name 'the Committee on Low Fertility & the Ageing Society' in 2005 with new legislation passed 'The Basic Law of Low Fertility & the Ageing Society', in June 2005.

6.1.2). This recognition of the low fertility rate and the worthwhileness of childcare generated a sufficient level of social consensus to bring forth agreement to support women's caring work and encourage their participation in work outside the home. The interview with the second minister of the MGE showed that regardless actors' positions the issue of childcare was popular as an option to use to resolve the low fertility rate problem. She commented 'it doesn't matter who you are. All groups, for instance people from: businesses, religion, labour and even conservative political parties have reached the same point of view on childcare in order to respond to the low fertility rate'. That is, during the era of the Roh government, the issue of childcare was mostly associated with grave concerns about low fertility rates (MOGEF, 2006; PCAFS, 2004; The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee., 2007).

All political concerns about the low birth rate were actually based on economic interests. For example, how could we maintain reproduction and sustainable growth together? It is obvious that the low birth rate brings less labour force to the labour market in the long term, especially considering the relative increase in the number of the elderly. It told us we needed to bring in a 'new human group' which hardly ever enters the labour market as a worker, for example, the elderly, the disabled and women. Who would be capable of working in the labour market? Of course, women!!! You see that there was only 'one' reason why the government cared about the low birth rate. It was all about economic reasons. How could we drive women to work without them worrying about caring for their children? Women are always regarded as a tool in this society. They have never been considered as an aim in themselves.

(Interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee)

The interview with one of the Blue House appointees who was also serving as an academic consultant supported this perspective. Moreover, in terms of the continuity of the ideology of gender mainstreaming, the interview data suggests that the earlier Kim government was in a way a preparation period in which the political atmosphere was opened up to women's issues. It was only subsequent to the foundations laid by the Kim administration that the issue of childcare could become a national task under the Roh government.

The discourse of the socialisation of care has been embarked upon due to

warnings about the low fertility rate, especially having the shocking figure of 1.18 announced in 2003. The Roh government built the concept of the socialisation of care as a women's issue to resolve the low birth rate, whereas the previous Kim government had brought awareness of gender in this country by encouraging the gender mainstreaming movement and advocating women friendly policy directions.

(Interviewee 1, academic consultant / political appointee)

However, this starting point for approaching the issue of childcare needs to be critically assessed, to gauge whether for instance, the policy direction of the socialisation of care has been completely imbued with gender perspectives with respect to comprehending women's working conditions in the labour market as well as the fundamental social structures underpinning reproduction-related events in their lifespan. As revealed in the interview with one of the political appointees to the Blue House, a simplistic understanding of childcare twinned with the low fertility rate might have driven the desire to increase births without considering any intervention in the labour market to advance women. She bitterly criticised the economic perspective view of childcare saying that 'there was only simple logic, that is, once we have got a system of childcare provision, the rate of women' employment in the labour market would automatically increase' (interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee).

6.3.2 Changes in patterns of paid employment for working mothers

Regarding the policy agenda of childcare, the government also addressed the difficulty in the reconciliation of women's working and family life responsibilities, termed work-life balance. A governmental research report revealed that the main reason for women avoiding having babies was the uncertainty they had regarding this balance (T.-h. Kim et al., 2005). As discussed in Chapter 3, Korean women's working participation pattern showed at this time an M-shaped curve, unlike many developed countries that showed a reverse U-shaped type. This indicated that many women experienced a career interruption due to the burden of childcare. One of the think tanks under the Prime Minister's Office, the Korea Institute for Health and

Social Affairs (henceforth 'KIHSA'²⁸), conducted a survey in 2003 on the situation concerning the need for childcare and education. According to this survey, married working women were likely to leave their employment after giving birth. In particular, it shows that 49.9% of them tended to leave after the first birth, whereas 19.3% left work after the second birth and 22.8% after the third. It also shows that the main reason for leaving work was the burden of caring for the children (KIHSA, 2003). Again, these results encouraged the government to re-organise childcare services in such a way as to better suit working mothers. One of the interviews with the parents' group leader revealed how much women had been struggling with achieving a work-life balance and that a significant reason for not having children was directly related to this issue, 'We do not mean that we do not want to have a baby, but one just cannot have a baby in these very difficult circumstances!' (interviewee 5, parents' organisation leader).

Regarding increasing female participation in the labour market, the emphasis on the reconciliation of work-life balance has been central in approaching childcare as a policy agenda. This interest in making the potential female workforce active facilitated the setting of the policy goal of providing better childcare services which it was thought would increase working mothers' participation. The goal for raising participation 'from 53.4% to 60%' was stated in the announcement regarding childcare policy made by the Roh government for the first time in public (PCAFS, 2004, p. 6). Moreover, this consideration of working mothers' needs while implementing childcare policy was noticeable when the policy allowed for extended and weekend childcare in the mid to long term plans set out in 2006 (MOGEF, 2006).

To sum up, this section has investigated which issues were identified as being policy problems and how they were presented and justified. Within the broad context of the changing family structure and the weakening of the family in its role as carer, the low fertility rate was the key problem that provided the justification for making childcare an agenda. In parallel, childcare was termed a necessity if the government

²⁸ KIHSA has engaged in policy research and short to long term plans on social policy, contributing to the improvement of people's quality of life. They recently have focused on the issue of low fertility and ageing that raise the government's profile in providing childcare and healthcare infrastructure. Available from: <http://www.kihasa.re.kr/html/jsp/> [Accessed 26 September 2013]

was to increase women's participation in the workforce. As discussed in Chapter 2, it is acknowledged that, in Kingdon's terms, when policy ideas 'bump into one another, they combine with one another' (Kingdon, 1995, p. 131) Thus the policy problems surrounding childcare policy had significant overlap with other policy dimensions and policy responses were needed that covered the family and work-life balance. The next section discusses how these problematic issues have been transferred into policy responses.

6.4 Responses to these policy problems

Policy response is a complex and multifaceted dimension of policy processes. It represents a complex range of phenomena and draws on ideas from across the social sciences (Hudson & Lowe, 2009). This section deals with the policy response that the government adopted to cope with the problems that were considered pertinent. As the very low fertility rate trend continued with the nation's fertility rate dipping to 1.08 in 2005, the Roh government started to take on this policy issue of fertility rates and concern about the ageing society as a national cause and it was enough to prompt the government to start sharing policy ideas. The government enacted the 'Framework Act on Low Fertility and Population Policy' in 2005, and established the Presidential Committee on Low Fertility and Population Policy²⁹ as a body directly responsible to the President. Then the government created a policy implementation team within the MHW and subsequently, the committee issued a report, entitled '*The Saromaji Plan for 2010: The First Basic Plan for low fertility and the ageing society*' in 2006 (PCAFS, 2004). The report indicated that further policy should include ways to establish a sustainable society in which the younger and the older generations together could achieve a birth rate that was at a replacement level. The overall aim was to plan the infrastructure needed to respond to the low fertility rate and ageing

²⁹ The Presidential Committee on Low Fertility and Population Policy consisted of 12 ministers and 12 private experts with the President as chair. In 2008, it was placed under the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and as of 2010, the committee was composed of 11 vice ministers and 13 individual experts.

population between 2006 and 2010 to remedy the low fertility rate and thus generate successful outcomes that would be visible in subsequent years.

For this, we present sub policy alternatives; enforcement of social responsibility for childbirth and rearing for children, composing the social mood for family friendly and gender equality, and cultivating sound future generations ('Saromaji Plan for 2010: The First Basic Plan for low fertility and ageing society).

(Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society, July 2006)

According to this report, the responses covered three key policy areas: family, work-life balance, and childcare policy. All of these were aimed at resolving the low fertility problem, and in this context, the government constantly emphasised the significance of childcare with the phrase of 'gonggongsung' in providing childcare services, which meant that the state's responsibility for caring for children was to be increased. Based on this policy direction, Mr Roh highlighted the value of reconciling work with family life through his public speeches as follows:

Childcare should be regarded as the most significant policy in itself, since it encourages the rate of fertility, prepares for an aged society and supports women's work participation, which will potentially bring economic growth. Building the environment to reconcile work and life is the best moral and efficient investment, I think.

(Mr Roh's speech cited in 'Childcare Support Policy: the 60th Governmental Project meeting' on 11th June 2004 cited in The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee, 2007, p. 67)

Although the proposed policy direction, that is, 'gonggongsung', was based on implementing family life and work balancing policies, the underpinning and much desired outcome was a rise in the hitherto low fertility rate. In particular, family policy was one of the first policy responses made by the government to resolve this problem. The political discourse behind these developments stressed the role of families as the bedrock of society. That is, the administration was of the view that families were the basic social unit that carried moral values, which brought up the next generation, and which sustained local communities (Jane Millar & Haux, 2012) and in this regard, Korea was no exception with it being the state's moral obligation

to share the burden of childcare by supporting women and families. Subsequently, the government changed the name of the MGE to the 'Ministry of Gender Equality and Family' (MOGEF) in June 2005 (see Table 6-1 in this chapter). The duty of childcare had been transferred earlier in June 2004 and this change aimed to strengthen and coordinate family-related policies and to respond to the low fertility problem that had emerged as a priority. Roh's government, for the first time, put considerable effort into designing comprehensive measures and intervening in family life by enacting the '*Basic Act on the Healthy Family*' in 2004, although controversy still remains about the purpose of this law. In particular, groups which opposed the idea of the existence of a typical healthy or normal family proposed a revised version of this law, as soon as it was in place.

The attempt by the Roh administration to resolve the problem of low fertility rates combined initiatives taken from the fields of family, work-life balance and childcare policy. It has to be acknowledged that it is a challenge to separate off each policy area and isolate them when considering overlapping systems in Korean social policy; any categorization depends on the context in which policies are discussed. For example, work-life balance matters used to be classified under the heading of labour market policy, which led to work-life balance policy being criticized as targeting only working women, active in the workforce (Yoon, 2010). However, the government picked out these three areas because they were of the belief that changing family and work-life balance policies could engender, in the long run, the most appropriate social environment for providing encouragement to women to have children. The promotion of childcare policy by contrast was a useful instantaneous response that gained public support and at the same time, increased the likelihood of women having children by supporting their caring responsibilities within the family (S.-j. Lee, 2011).

All these policy ideas started from political consideration of how to encourage women to have children. Mr Roh often claimed that 'The state will rear children so that mothers do not have to worry about having a baby.' (The Presidential Counsel of Policy Planning Committee., 2007). This emphasis placed on the state helping to care for the next generation by the President at the time was the one of main reasons

for the budget (see Chapter 5) on childcare dramatically rising over the ten years from 1990 to 2002 (interviewee 7, senior civil servant). She described the tension between the MGE and the MOSF around the expansion of the childcare budget explaining that

Certainly the minister of the MOSF didn't want to increase the governmental budget on childcare services but what could he do in front of the President who kept saying the budget needs to be increased with the transfer of the duty? The MOSF only did continue being against the decision in their "under the table" work.

(Interviewee 7, senior civil servant)

Moreover, the report of the project meeting held by the Blue House highlighted why investment in children was an important economic consideration, saying that *'if the children are well cared for and well educated, they will surely be well qualified human resources in the future'* (The 46th Governmental Project Meeting, 11th June, 2004, The MGE Business Report, 2005). At the same time, Roh's government considered childcare as the way to reconcile work and life demands and it was aware that a favourable environment that could alleviate women's caring burden regarding childcare cost as well as caring work itself, was potentially the best way to encourage them to have children. This recognition of the nature of the caring burden led the government to consider supporting women through providing good quality childcare services in the market for nursery and early years places.

One of the interviewees who used to be in the Blue House, working as an academic consultant was rather cynical about why the government was suddenly so keen on childcare. Moreover this respondent was dismissive of the governmental approach saying that in the rush to provide more childcare, the government failed to give adequate thought to how best to achieve it and at the same time, neglected to consider the nature of good quality service:

The start of childcare in this country was embarked upon because of the discourse of low fertility; how to increase workers' participation in the labour market. Childcare was one of the tools to bring women to the labour market. The problem was that the government did not consider how to improve the service available in the care market. They only had

the logic that we need to expand the childcare service, but they did not think about how to do it...

(Interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee)

6.5 Summary

The data taken from the interviews indicates that through sharing ideas a paradigm shift occurred regarding childcare and women's issues as being inextricably linked together. By connecting the two, comprehensive and fundamental policy responses to resolving the problem of low fertility could be generated (interviewees 3, 10 and 16, academic consultant, NGO group leader, governmental researcher). This emerges as different in nature to the previous political efforts to intervene in childcare services that happened during the 1980s. It appears that the Roh government was most interested in creating the circumstances conducive to achieving work life balance for working mothers, whereas in earlier times, childcare provision was essentially a residual service for children from poor families. Further, the Roh government argued that the responsibility for caring work, particularly that concerning children, needed to be taken up by everyone in society and this included the state actively intervening in the administration of adequate care services for all potential users (MOGEF, 2006; PCAFS, 2004). Nonetheless, questions remain regarding how improvements to childcare services could have been more critically discussed and defined. The policy responses, that is, policy on the family and work life balance have brought into being the concept of 'gonggongsung' which is taken to mean the socialisation of childcare in the Korean context. In the next chapter I explore policy initiatives for the socialisation of care through reform of childcare service provision.

Chapter 7: Empirical findings (part III)

Exploring the policy initiatives for the socialisation of care

In the previous chapter, to understand the backdrop to the reform of childcare policy, it was necessary to probe the policy factors, policy actors and policy problems and outline the responses made at the time by the Roh government. Having drawn the overall picture for the reforms in Chapter 6, and in so doing, identified the problem and its associated gender issues, in this chapter the policy proposals for action, that is, the policy initiatives for reforming childcare services are addressed. Although the Roh administration was intent on creating the circumstances conducive to achieving work life balance for working mothers, it is necessary to analyse the qualitative data further to see whether these options reinforced or challenged gender stereotypes and the systematic discrimination against mothers in the provision of childcare services.

In this chapter I investigate the initiation process for various options in order to reveal the nature of certain policy proposals and the reasons why the actors justified them as being worthy of consideration. This is achieved by taking the three elements of care provision: affordability, adequacy and autonomy, which were proposed in Chapter 2. These key elements are employed to indicate how institutional settings at the macro-level, i.e. state based structure of the provision, relate to the actual caring conditions under which care is carried out and received by families, that is, at the micro level.

From the analysis of the in-depth interviews and policy documents three competing discourses emerged regarding the trajectory of the childcare reforms that are central to the gonggongsung direction of policy. In section 6.1 the policy choice regarding whether to increase the number of public childcare centres or, instead, to utilise extant private childcare centres is addressed under the element of affordability (i.e. being able to pay for care provision from the care market). Next, in section 6.2, whether to maximise or minimise governmental intervention regarding service quality is discussed in relation to adequacy (i.e. the extent to which childcare provision meets expectations regarding quality). Finally, whether or not to abolish the ceiling set for childcare costs charged to families is considered in section 6.3 under the heading of autonomy (i.e. the degree of freedom there needs to be in

choosing and accessing the services without any institutional restraints). Each of these discourses is discussed according to the chronology of policy evaluation introduced and justified in Table 2-2 in Chapter 2:

- Contextualising the generation of the policy, setting out the narrative and introducing the key players active in a particular time frame
- The development of the decision making process surrounding a particular policy and the specific factors influencing the decision
- Bringing forth the desired outcome and the policy actors' reactions to the outcomes of the chosen policy proposal.

Moreover, the contents of this chapter largely revisit the policy events of the Roh era. Thus, in this evaluation I am building on what was outlined in Chapter 6 and explaining more thoroughly the actors, pieces of legislation and the policy initiatives surrounding childcare.

7.1 Affordability

: whether to increase the number of public childcare centres or to utilise private childcare centres

A substantial change in providing childcare services occurred with the Childcare Act (2004) which superseded the earlier act of 1991. This legislation stipulated the principle of sharing responsibility for the costs of childcare between central and local governments and parents, that is, the act specified that the state's liability for payments needed to be extended. Based on this fundamental change of stance contained in the act, the key amendment was to introduce a scheme of basic subsidy support and to extend the coverage of the graded support for children. Prior to the introduction of this basic subsidy and the graded support, government involvement had been limited to funding publicly provided childcare places and monies were spent on meeting the expenses entailed in operating such facilities and paying care workers' salaries. The basic subsidy support was extended from only covering public provision to include a certain portion of the total cost for young children attending

private childcare facilities. Henceforth, central and local governments had to share the cost of the subsidy between themselves, i.e. 50% and 40% in each case. Moreover, the payment for childcare continued to be sent directly to the institute selected by a child's parents. Regarding the graded support programme, which was not as fundamental a change as the basic subsidy put in place under the act, this was extended so as to increase the number of children in a family that could be eligible for aid, according to the First Childcare Policy Support published by PCAFS in 2004. Below, an account is given of how the Childcare Act was shaped by many of the policy factors, actors and problems and the responses that were introduced in the preceding chapter. This section addresses the dimension of affordability as it deals with the matter of payment for childcare.

Overall seven types of childcare centres were available and these are categorized according to ownership: national/public, legal corporation, incorporated organizations, centre based individual, home based individual, parental cooperative³⁰ and workplace-based. Whereas the first two (national/public and legal corporations) are categorized as publicly funded childcare centres run, not for profit, by the state, local governments or alternatively, social welfare corporations, the remainder are deemed to be private childcare centres as they are profit making. Considering that the publicly provided and funded day nursery places comprised only 6% of total provision, and that only about 13% of children were enrolled in such places (Statistics on Childcare, 2002), it is evident that the government's share of total childcare provision was very small at this time, in the early 2000s, when the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) was responsible for its administration. On the contrary, for the rest of the facilities, i.e. those under private ownership, there had rarely been any government subsidies, except for individual centres that cared for young infants in their homes, categorised as 'individuals home based' which yielded 36% of total facilities in 2002 (Statistics for Childcare, 2002). Even in the cases of support for these individual centres, state contributions only amounted to 10% of the total care worker salary expenses in each centre (Guide to Childcare, 2004: 120-143).

³⁰ It was voluntary organised by parental groups in 1978 and institutionalised in 2004. Refer more details from Hwang's dissertation: Hwang, 2008. Gongdongyookaundong Jedohwaui gyungrowa Gwajung Sunggyuke Gwanhan Yeongu (공동육아운동 제도화의 경로와 과정, 성격에 대한 연구). Thesis (M.A). Sunggonghui University. South Korea.

Thus, as can be seen from these figures, when compared to the support for the public childcare centres, at this time, very little aid was given to the private sector and this differentiated subsidy system of government support led to widespread complaints from the private owners.

Having acknowledged the structure of the care provision and governmental support, attention turns to investigating the nature of the context that brought about the policy initiatives of the basic subsidy and extending the graded subsidy which were both closely related to the matter of cost charged to parents for using the services. Although the original governmental concern centred on how to make the services affordable for parents, this matter led to many complex questions circulating at the political level. Regarding the implementation of these government subsidies, two principle debates occurred focused on the basic subsidy. Firstly, there was the issue regarding who should be entitled to receive the governmental basic subsidy, that is, whether it should be the institutions or the children (i.e. their parents). Secondly, if the subsidy were to go to institutions, the matter of which kind of provider should receive it had to be resolved. That is, should it be only the public childcare centres, the private centres or both types? If only the former, then a further question arose as to whether to build more publicly funded and run childcare centres. Alternatively, if using private childcare centres was the preferred option, then it had to be decided whether utilising the private centres already in the care market could be the solution.

7.1.1 Contextualising the generation of the policy proposal: the basic subsidy

The MGE accepted that the government's responsibility for taking a share of the financial burden for childcare costs should be increased. As soon as childcare was transferred from the MHW to the MGE in June 2004, the minister for the MGE organised consultation meetings called 'winding-up' discussions (called in Korean 'kkeutjangtoron'), but despite the name, unfortunately, these meetings dragged on, lasting all day every time they were held (Interviewees 3, 4 and 10, academic consultant, women's group organisation leader, NGO group leader respectively). These meetings were independent from the Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society (PCAFS) which already existed within the new administration in the

Blue House³¹. The aim of these consultations was to reach a social consensus which would encompass all different childcare issues being advanced by a variety of different voices. Fourteen representatives attended from diverse childcare fields such as: the childcare workers' trade union, women's organisations, non-governmental organisations and academia, including governmental researchers (Interviewee 4, women's group leader). One of the group members reflected on a meeting in the following way:

The meeting was informal and lasted all day every single time it was called in the minister's office. I still remember that the minister of the MGE encouraged all to participate freely, talking about what they thought of the childcare policy. I found it very good because all of us were able to speak out without any reserve and make plans for the future together.

(Interviewee 10, academic consultant / NGO group leader / professor)

Alleviating the financial burden of childcare costs on parents was a key issue considered during the reform of childcare policy, as explained in Chapter 6 (see section 6.2). As described earlier, 90% of children were cared for in private settings and their parents were often charged more than twice as much as those using public childcare centres (PCAFS, 2004; MOGEF, 2006). This financial burden was identified as being one of the main factors for parents' reluctance to use the private care services (ibid). This burden of childcare was also considered to be a reason for making mothers decide to care for their children by themselves and to give up their participation in the labour market, especially when the children were quite young (0-2 years old). In fact, the 2003 survey on the use of childcare services demonstrated that only 14% of mothers of children aged 0-2 years used services and just 31.2% of those with children aged 3-5 years (MOGEF, 2003³²). Having considered these actual conditions, it was not surprising that the financial burden, particularly for

³¹ The Blue House which literally means 'pavilion of blue titles' is the executive office and official residence of the South Korean head of state, the President of the Republic of Korea and is located in the capital city of Seoul. The main building and its two annexes are covered with a total of 150,000 traditional Korean blue roof tiles, hence the name 'Blue House' is also commonly used when referring to Cheongwadae. Available from http://english.president.go.kr/tours/place_buildings/place00.php [Accessed 4 September 2013].

³² MOGEF, Survey on using childcare service, 2003

those using private childcare centres was an issue that was commonly shared within the discussion group.

Within this examination of the financial burden for parents, all members attending the winding-up discussions were agreed that there was a need for publicly provided and funded childcare centres to be built. They confirmed that this would be the best way to make the childcare system a ‘public good’ rather than a ‘commodity’ or a ‘marketised’ service. One of them in the interview firmly supported this saying that ‘we including the Minister Ji couldn’t agree more to build more public childcare centres’ (Interviewee 10, academic consultant / NGO group leader / professor). However, this argument needed to be robust so as to persuade opponents as to why more childcare services should be publicly run and funded. In fact, the meeting group members and the minister in the MGE were cross-examined by the Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF) staff as to why public childcare centres needed to be expanded, thus, in theory, taking such a large amount of the government’s budget. This argument meant the MGE was fundamentally challenged to answer the question why the government should provide more childcare services. Having had this challenge, the minister of the MGE was aware of the relatively small budget previously allocated to childcare within the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) and she knew that the MOSF would be reluctant to increase it immediately. It was also certain that the MOSF would not raise the amount of the budget without firm economic reasoning:

It was very hard to see the MOSF’s agreement to the expansion of the public childcare centres. I knew that we had very different approaches to understanding childcare, yet it was more than I was expecting. I had to explain all about things in providing childcare like learning alphabet... ABC. They did not understand why childcare needed to be a universal service and even why the government needed to support children who are not within a low income family. Clearly, it was the biggest challenge for me to persuade them.

(Interviewee 6, the minister)

Indeed, when the duty of childcare was originally with the MHW, the level of childcare related activity languished with only a small proportion of the total

government budget being made available because under the MHW, funding childcare had only been covering the costs associated with accommodating low income families' children.

Contrary to the stance held by the last interviewee, a strong argument was made pointing out that government responsibility for childcare should remain limited to a residual involvement. Further, as explained by another respondent, the Roh government had been misguided and had intervened in childcare provision to an excessive extent:

I have been strongly against the argument saying that public childcare centres should be increased in this country. In my view, the public provision by the state's intervention is completely wrong. Let me explain why it is not right, in terms of an economic view. First of all, there are two ways governments intervene in markets: one is 'public production', and the other is 'public provision'. Basically, the state must not produce any goods as a producer, because they are relatively inefficient at producing goods, compared to what private owners do in a market. If the state really wants to produce anything, it should be only something private markets cannot produce, for example, childcare provision in a rural area or the service for low income families. In this country, the fundamental problem in providing care service is that there still exists the idea that the government should provide the service as a provider. Do you know when this silly idea came about? That is the Kim and Roh governments, which brought in a completely wrong recognition of the childcare provision.

(Interviewee 13, academic consultant / professor)

As argued by this well informed respondent, although there were significant reasons not to pursue public provision of childcare, this choice, that would necessarily demand a huge amount of governmental budget, featured significantly in the discussion group set up by the MGE. The reason for this focus may be traced to the fact that, first of all, there had been limited scope for covering the desired or perceived needs for public provision in the care market for children. As described earlier in Chapter 3, from around the 1980s, the Kim Young-sam government had encouraged private owners to build centres using low cost loans taken from the National Pension Fund with few restrictions being applied to their enterprising initiatives. Consequently, there was little regulation of the establishment of facilities

and many of the new private facilities were established in urban areas. As these facilities were operated for profit making purposes, the owners had naturally located centres in areas where relatively high levels of demand existed. This imbalance in provision caused difficulties regarding use of the service and led to differentiated access, disadvantaging parents living in rural areas as compared to their urban and small town counterparts.

Given the existing care provision structure, under the umbrella term the socialisation of care (gonggongsung), it was expressed publicly that increasing the number of public funded and provided facilities in the care market was the appropriate way to reform childcare policy. One of the branches of the Korea Edu-Care Association, the public childcare association, stated the importance of public provision.

The business of care and education should not be about the pursuit of profit and its first objective should be that it is for the public good. We should have a minimum 50% of public provision in the care market, which can form the basis of public childcare so that children in low - income families can be cared for within this system in safety and good health. Above all, childcare provision should be based on a non-commercial business.

(We need childcare provision like this, Seoul Edu-care Association, March 2006³³).

This social agreement regarding the socialisation of care was disseminated as the preferred wish expressed by not only civil organisations such as the PSPD and the KWAU (these two actors were briefly introduced in Chapter 6) but also the government, labour groups and entrepreneurial business groups. Statements from the ‘Social Community Agreement’ which was agreed by all these groups set out their opinion of the need have more public childcare provision. The PSPD and KWAU specifically stated they wanted to have 30% public childcare provision in the Social Community Agreement set out below:

The universal childcare provision should be provided to give access

³³ The title is in Korean: Irun Boyooksaeopi Pilyohamnida (이런 보육사업이 필요합니다).

childcare and to make a better quality service, which leads to higher birth rates (the likelihood that a woman will have a child because she can for reasons that are not necessarily to do with her own fertility) and childcare for women. For this, groups of civil and labour groups suggested having specific plans and objectives to make it happen. For instance, the civil group and women's group argue that we should have 30% of our childcare provision as 'public' and the labour group suggests we should have 50% of public care provision, whereas the government simply states that we should expand the public childcare provision and increase the number of workplace childcare facilities and we should establish non-profit corporations, such as a religious corporation and so on.

(Community Agreement: the Agreement to Resolve Low Fertility and Ageing society³⁴, 20th June 2006).

In particular, this emphasis on the importance of the public provision was voiced fiercely by academics in the fields of social welfare and gender studies. The People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), as explained in Chapter 6, was a civil group representing people's voices under the motto of 'social solidarity' and its members were known for driving forward progressive and rather radical discourses in the midst of policy production. Regarding the reform of the childcare policy, they continuously argued that the socialisation of care should be advanced and to do this the number of public childcare facilities had to be increased. In all their statements they claimed that gonggongsung of care provision would not be feasible without the government trying to increase the amount of public provision. Together with the PSPD, the Korean Women's Association United (KWAU), another progressive civil group which advocated for women's interests and legal rights (see Chapter 6) argued for more public provision. The common concerns shared by the PSPD and the KWAU involved two issues: how to achieve the socialisation of care by sharing the responsibility between state and the family, and how to alleviate the care burden for women at home, which was where the care responsibility burden was usually placed in the first instance. They were all similarly agreed that the socialisation of care needed to be advanced, in order to alleviate the financial burden, especially for low income families, including single mothers.

³⁴ The title in Korean: Jeochualsan Goryunghwamoonje Haegyuleul Wihan Sahoihyupyak (저출산 고령화문제 해결을 위한 사회협약).

However, it appears that approval of the expansion of the number of publicly provided and funded childcare centres was not carried over into feasible action plans in policy announcements such as the '*Sa-ssak Plan: Mid-Long Term Plan*' (July 2006) by the MOGEF (which was formerly the MGE) and the '*Saromaji Plan for 2010*' issued by the PCAFS in the same year. The '*Saromaji Plan for 2010*' contained the blue print for the expansion of public centres which involved the government setting a target for these of 30% of the total (PCAFS, 2006, p. 53). However, this might have been a rather ambitious goal since the proportion of public centres at that time was only 5%, covering just 10% of all accommodated children. In the same year, the MOGEF announced its plan for increasing the proportion of children within the public sector in the *Sa-ssak Plan: the First Mid-Long Term Plan (2006-2010)*. In this document, the MOGEF showed its strong intent regarding increasing the number of public centres with their original target being to double the number by 2010, which would represent approximately 10% in total (MOGEF, 2006). It appeared doubtful whether this goal too was going to be feasible and the leader of the PSPD criticised the Sa-ssak Plan in the organisation's monthly bulletin, arguing that it did not provide specific details. Despite the claim that the number of public childcare centres would be doubled from 1,352 in 2005 to 2,700 centres by 2010, this, in fact, would still only represent 10% of the total number of places. Moreover, in overall terms in the policy announcement, this specific direction to increase public provision was not sufficiently explicit about how many public centres were to be built and did not address the matter of how to raise the money required (J.-h. Kim, 2006).

Further, some interview respondents commented that they were surprised to see that the policy announcement mentioned that public childcare centres needed to be increased in number but that there were no specific details given on how this was to be achieved (Interviewees 3, 9, 10 and 11). Interviewee 11, an academic consultant /political appointee in the Blue House strongly criticised this saying that 'there was only verbal discussion about increasing public childcare provision up to 30%, and nothing actually appeared in the specific policy plan'. Other interviews with the members of the winding-up discussion group revealed that the policy direction to establish the expansion of public childcare provision that had been discussed within

the group at great length, eventually disappeared. The interviewee 3 who was proud to say that she contributed the policy ideas in the *First Childcare Support* document and the *Saromaji Plan for 2010* as an academic consultant disappointedly commented that ‘I am 100% sure that there were powerful lobby groups behind the scenes who manipulated the policy direction. You know that in the policy making process hearings with expert groups were always taken in the first place, but lobby groups were always there at the end’. Later, respondents noted that discussion about the expansion of the public childcare centres had shifted to being discussions concerning how to utilise the extant private childcare centres that already made up 90% of provision in the market (Interviewees 3, 4, 10 and 11, academic consultant, women’s group leader, NGO group leader respectively). With respect to this, interviewee 11 regretted that at the time of these debates ‘we were always too much concerned about the existence of private associations behind us and tended to be conscious about their resistance against to our decision’.

One of the interviewees suggested that at this point in the discussions, when the notion of building more public provision disappeared from the policy documents, there may have been active intervention by the private owners’ representative groups which were against increasing the number of public childcare centres. She said that ‘this was down to the fact that increased numbers of public childcare centres could be a barrier to the privately run centres enrolling additional children (Interviewee 3, academic consultant, professor). This was likely to happen as many parents expressed a preference for the service provided by the public facilities and lacked confidence with the private ones (MOGEF, 2006; MOGEF 2003). Another interviewee, a senior civil servant revealed that ‘the possibility of having increased numbers of public childcare centres was potentially a threat to the private owners’ interests’. However, using the private sector as care provider could have been advanced as a more practical and feasible way to resolve the complex matter at hand, particularly given the relatively smaller budget that would be required if these centres were to be used in place of expanding public childcare that would necessitate many new facilities being built. Interviewee 11, a political appointee in the Blue House described the situation at the time commenting ‘As long as we could not directly prove that increasing public childcare centres would bring increased

women's participation in the labour market it was very hard to continuously argue that we need to increase the number of public childcare centres'.

There had always been a range of possible ways of increasing the number of public childcare centres, such as for instance, building new facilities or transferring existing private institutions to the public sector. In the circumstances where there was around 90% private sector dominance of the market, the expansion of public centres, in spite of the fact many parents would probably be in favour of sending their children to new facilities, was a challenge for local government authorities in whose districts such new provision could be established. The interview comments from a senior civil servant showed that 'most local government civil servants were reluctant to advocate the expansion of public centres because local governments would have to expand their budget as the result of the increased number of public childcare centres'. It has to be noted that although running expenses of these facilities were to be supported by central government, other costs, such as the operational costs and employee salaries were to be supported by the local government to the tune of 50% of the total (in 2005), excepting the local government area in Seoul where it was 80% of the total (Guidelines on Childcare, 2005).

Their concerns about this proposal thus stemmed from the limited budget held by local authorities for spending on childcare that would be put under pressure by having more public childcare centres. Moreover, at the local level, private associations tended to have good relations with local council elected representatives. Interviewee 7, a senior civil servant explained that private associations were becoming politically powerful at the local level saying that 'the private childcare associations including the KPNEA tended to become political by doing lobbying in the local region'. When the private centres were first built, almost all had been built in semi-urban areas, such as small towns, due to the low price of land and thus often private owners had good relations with their local councillors. One of the senior civil servants who dealt with the business of childcare in the MGE described the relationship between the private owners and local politicians as follows:

The Private Childcare Association tended to get along well with the local councillors. When the private business started, most of them had been

built in rather rural areas, due to low land prices. Additionally, they were getting very politically powerful in every single election and having their voices heard.

(Interviewee 7, senior civil servant)

Without doubt the intention to expand the number of public childcare centres was faced with the problem of obtaining adequate funding from central government and, for operational costs, from local government. The interview with the minister shows that the MGE and the discussion group members, including herself, who advocated the expansion, struggled to persuade bureaucrats in the Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF) to give funding. She expressed the feelings of the MOSF at the time by saying that ‘the MOSF didn’t let us have the budget on childcare expanded as much as we wanted: they preferred to have kept a different level of governmental support for childcare’. It was difficult to find a persuasive answer that satisfied the finance officials’ questions regarding justifying why public childcare centres should be increased in number in spite of there being existing capacity in the private sector. Moreover, expansionist advocates had to say why the state needed to take responsibility for caring work. There was again an insurmountable difference in the understanding of the nature of childcare and the state having responsibility for its provision between the ministries. It appears that the MOGEF failed in persuading the MOSF to release a sufficient share of the budget for increasing the number of public childcare facilities and so, in short, the idea of increasing public childcare centres became little more than a superficial slogan or buzz word circulated in official documents. Although eventually the number of public childcare centres increased slightly, there was a considerable shortfall regarding the targets that had been set out in the initial plan. One of informants who was a political appointee in the Blue House pointed out that

The departmental people from the MOSF were only looking for the sentences which didn’t include any word of expanding public childcare centres. The most significant consideration for them was not women’s issues in understanding childcare provision but the way of delivering the childcare services..... It was quite hard even for the minister of the MGE to persuade the MOSF to release more budget for expanding the number of public childcare provision centres.

(Interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee)

The interview with one of the committee chairpersons in the Blue House reveals the chronic problem in the care market, that is, the pre-existing dominance and reliance on the private sector. Hence, the proposal to increase the number of public childcare centres was very difficult to achieve considering the existing unbalanced nature of the care market structure that was heavily weighted in favour of private provision.

We were quite well aware about that. We did not have enough public facilities at that time and we also needed to make social care provision better, especially based on public schemes. However, as you know, childcare provision was originally encouraged to be built on a private basis. Because of this initial approach, we needed to grasp the influential power of the private childcare centres' associations. All kinds of childcare centres were supposed to work cooperatively with their own local government. Therefore, the local government could not say easily we want to expand the number of public childcare facilities to the private associations. Within this context, it was hardly possible to have 30% of public facilities as the KWAU had insisted.

(Interviewee 1, academic consultant / political appointee)

The dominance described above meant that private providers could ensure that their voices were heard and that they could affect policy change. However, knowing the extent to which their pressure was brought to bear on this policy proposal is difficult, but it is certain that the policy context was being influenced by this powerful lobby.

The government's will to increase the number of public childcare centres became part of the proposal for introducing a basic subsidy. The statistical data collected by the governmental researchers had shown that the financial burden on care users in the market needed to be alleviated, regardless of whether the parents used public or private facilities. Surprisingly, the issue of the inequity between the users of the different types of facilities was raised again when the possibility of the expansion of public centres disappeared. One of the members of the winding-up discussion group, who had strongly argued for more public childcare centres over time, described the turning point in her stance

I couldn't help approving the basic subsidy because the rate of public

users would still be low compared to the private users even although we increased the number of public childcare centres with the small budget allocated. Given this situation, what could I have done otherwise in order to reduce the gap between private users and the public users?

(Interviewee 4, women's group organisation leader)

It appears that introduction of the basic subsidy scheme was judged to be more feasible and was more a convincing idea from the point of view of the MOSF officers than the arguments put forward for increasing the number of public facilities. One of the government officers in the meeting group criticised the advocates of public provision for concentrating on debating the structure of childcare services as these had already been marketised and this particular battle had been lost many years before. According to this officer, time would be better spent on fundamental problems such resolving the inequality between parents and finding the funding for subsidising parents' expenses would appear to be the way forward. She bitterly said that 'the consensus of *'gonggongsung'* had been eaten into by the existing privatised provision in the care market, even before the consensus was built around this idea in our society'.

Another interview with one of the political appointees in the Blue House indicated that the discussion on the expansion of the number of public childcare centres was not mentioned by the time she was appointed to work on the policy in 2005. She firmly claimed that the concern about how to resolve the financial burden among parents had shifted to discussion of how best to utilise private childcare centres as care providers as part of the basic subsidy scheme.

When I joined the group in the Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society (PCAFS) all the discussions about childcare were concentrated on the issue of support to the institutions instead of increasing public facilities. It seemed the basic setting was already designed in the first meeting group (a wind-up discussion) and I was asked to design the graded subsidy. However, I was continuously insisting that we needed to increase the number of public facilities. To do this, I had to fight with the MOSF (Ministry of Strategy and Finance).

(Interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee)

Initial concerns about how to alleviate the financial burden for parents were gradually transformed into meeting the challenge of achieving more equity among users, in terms of the different costs parents spent on childcare services between the private and the public sector. Based on this policy context, the next section discusses the development of the policy proposals for the basic and graded subsidies and addresses which kind of policy proposals were chosen and which factors influenced policy consolidation.

7.1.2 The development of the policy options regarding equality between parents' paying for childcare

The consideration given to the matter of equity among the users of facilities in different sectors led to the two policy proposals, namely, the basic subsidy and strengthening the graded subsidy programme. In the case of the graded support, it was meant to extend the coverage to include more poor children who were eligible for support. The eligibility of families to receive help for their childcare expenses depended on family income. The introduction of these schemes was interpreted by their government advocates as an extension of the support for institutions, whilst in the opinion of one interviewee they could be construed as an extension of support for children, since the basic subsidy was only supposed to be given to childcare centres when they had eligible (i.e. poorer) children enrolled. He explained that 'the introduction of basic subsidy should be regarded as the expansion of governmental subsidy to children rather than being regarded as the support to institutes'. Both these schemes were intended to give the support to children rather than to institutions whereas under previous subsidy schemes run by the MHW they had applied only to public and non-profit institutions³⁵, and so had not followed the child, regardless of the parents' choice, as explained in the previous section.

³⁵ The interview with him informed me there was the basic subsidy for private institutions in the middle of 1990s under the Kim Young-sam administration (Feb 1993- Feb1998). However, this was stopped during the presidency because critics argued that there were not enough standardised criteria that could be used to calculate the service costings accurately. I could not find the date the subsidy was stopped.

One of the senior government researchers, who proposed that the basic subsidy should be applicable for the first time in private centres, described her reasons for suggesting this scheme to the minister;

Obviously, the ex-governments were not interested in what the private sector was doing. I am sure that I was the first person who proposed to introduce the basic subsidy. As soon as the duty of the childcare was handed over to the MGE, I immediately suggested to the Minister that we really needed to support the private sector. That was for the equity among children, i.e. between the public users and the private ones. I hardly saw any opponents to this suggestion, yet the PSPD (People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy) constantly insisted on building more publicly funded and provided facilities. They still argued that putting governmental money into private facilities could never be the right thing to do.

(Interviewee 8, senior governmental researcher)

Regarding the introduction of the basic subsidy, the minister of the MGE was convinced that any way adopted to support childcare had to be based on the children who needed the service in the care market. She explained her position and about the new changes to the subsidy as follows:

I am still continuously arguing that all government subsidies for childcare should be based on the way it is to be given to the children being cared for in the care market, regardless of the types of institution. Although I could not completely change this in my ministerial period, I was strongly sure that the change was on the right track.

(Interviewee 6, the first minister)

As already commented on, parents using private childcare centres during this time often had to pay more than twice the amounts paid by their counterparts using public ones (MOGEF 2006). This differential treatment arising from the application of the government subsidy scheme operated by the MHW exacerbated the inequality regarding charges among childcare facility users in the care market and a large number of parents using these private childcare centres faced a very severe financial burden. As a result, this financial burden was perceptible in there being relatively low demand for private childcare centres, whereas the public ones always had

waiting lists from which they could select their children. As public and national facilities could spend their allocated government subsidy in meeting their employees' salaries and other operating costs, they could provide a relatively better quality service, which, in turn, often resulted in higher levels of parental satisfaction as compared with those for private centres (Guideline on Childcare 2004, MHW). In addition, one of informants who had to deal with all complains by the private sectors within the MGE contained that 'private providers in rural areas did not have sufficient numbers of children on their books to make the facilities viable as young married couples generally preferred living in cities. Hence, during the times when the MHW was running its basic subsidy programme, many private facility owners, particularly those in small town locations, were struggling to meet their financial commitments'.

7.1.3 Achieving the desired outcome

The introduction of the basic subsidy and the extension of the graded subsidy were proposed in the 'First Scheme of Childcare Support' published by the PCAFS (Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society) in 2004. The first proposal was to support all facilities, regardless of type, with the basic subsidy. This option apparently aimed to alleviate financial burdens faced by parents using the private centres by adjusting the basic subsidy to cover all types of facilities. Some reporting on the impacts of the subsidy scheme on various aspects of childcare services have been noted earlier in Chapter 5 (see the sections 5.1.1 and 5.2.1). However, here more depth is given to elaborating on the resultant situations after introducing this policy option.

Drawing on the documentary evidence gathered from the report on the policy, Table 7-1 below shows that the intention was that parents' payments in both types of facilities would be equalised as a result of the basic subsidy being applied and the ratio of children to staff would be reduced favourably. Moreover, in the private centres parental payment would be reduced compared with what they had been paying previously. The plan was that the basic subsidy system was to be provided to the institutions by the government to cover additional childcare expenses which would also achieve enhancement of the quality of the private childcare services.

These points were specified as the principles of the subsidy system in the ‘Second Scheme of National Childcare Support Policy’ issued by the PCAFS (Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society) in May 2005. They should have been regarded as a positive change, particularly considering that the costs for caring for infants between zero and two years old were generally expensive. Also, this document raised the issue of the ratio of children to staff, which needed to be reduced, especially for the under three year olds. However, to address these points it was noted in the documents that there was the fear that the parents’ payment would have to be increased in order to employ more staff if no governmental support was forthcoming. Therefore, this document set out this as a reason for introducing the basic subsidy i.e. to provide better service quality with a reduction of the ratio of children to staff.

Table 7-1 Parents' payments after the introduction of the basic subsidy, by child's age, in 2005

Unit: KRW 1000

Age	Prior to the Basic subsidy support		After applying the basic subsidy support (Public and Private should be the same)	Ratio of children to staff
	Public and national	Private		
0	299	350	350	1:5 => 1:3
1	299	350	300	
2	247	288	250	
3	153	198	180	1:20 => 1:25
4-5	153	198	170	

Note: This is the cost excluding the basic subsidy and it does not take into account inflation

Source: Sa-ssak Plan: the First Mid-Long Term Childcare Plan (2006-2010), MOGEF, p.20

Regarding the extension of the graded subsidy, the main new proposal set out in this second scheme by the PCAFS was to expand the coverage of the number of children who could receive the graded subsidy support. This particular scheme is illustrated in Table 7-2 below. As shown in the table, the graded subsidy support in this policy document was supposed be expanded by income level, from 2003 to 2010, covering up to 130% of urban workers average income by 2010.

Table 7-2 The extension of the ‘graded subsidy support’ scheme¹

Unit: %

Income bracket	Income level	The support rate							
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1	Statutory minimum income	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2	The secondary poor	40	60	80	100	100	100	100	100
3	Up to 50%		40	60	70	80	80	80	80
4 ²	Up to 70%			30	40	50	60	60	60
5	Up to 100%			-	-	20	30	30	30
6	Up to 130%			-	-	-	-	30	30

Note:

1. The standard takes the ‘urban workers’ average income’ as a base-line of 100% (Apr, 2005); i.e. KRW 3,500,000
2. Income level 4 in 2005 was up to 60% of average income

Source: MOGEF (2006), Sa-sak Plan: The First Mid-Long Term Childcare Plan, p.21

Opinions differed regarding the nature of the childcare delivered by private childcare facilities and there was a continuing reluctance to include them in the government subsidy system. Regarding this, progressive social groups, such as the PSPD, voiced concerns about the quantitative growth of the private market that would take place if they were assisted with the subsidy. It was also argued that the private childcare centres would potentially be integrated as part of the public childcare sector if the government were to support them with subsidies. One NGO group leader shows that he regretted the approval of the basic subsidy;

It is true that the introduction of basic subsidy has contributed to the growth of private facilities. In terms of this, I feel very sorry about this.

(Interviewee 10, academic consultant, NGO group leader, professor)

Similarly, the KWAU argued that the first task for the government should be to increase public provision rather than to promote private centres by subsidising them. Nevertheless, in spite of these arguments against subsidising private facilities, the financial burden suffered by parents using private provision could not be ignored by

the PSPD and KWAU. The leader of the KWAU reflected on the approval of the basic subsidy in the winding-up meeting group;

I think the proposal of the basic subsidy was a momentous decision in the development of Korean care provision by having considered the responsibility of the government: how to let the children have a better service and how to alleviate the parents' financial burden. Although there was a consideration of whether to extend the public provision, I could not help approving the basic subsidy in order to resolve the financial burden of private users. However, I regret that since then this system has increased the number of private facilities in this country.

(Interviewee 4, women's group organisation leader)

According to the interview data, it is clear that the number of private facilities increased significantly after the introduction of the basic subsidy scheme in 2004, and as forewarned, the policy may have helped the growth of private provision. This is despite the fact that its initial aim was to alleviate parents' financial burdens and the inequity regarding parental payments between the public and private types of facilities (interviewees 2, 3 and 4, governmental researcher, academic consultant researcher and women's group organisation leader).

A survey carried out by the Korean Institute for Childcare and Education (KICCE) before the subsidy was introduced showed that more than 80% of the publicly funded and provided facilities were against the scheme to support children through government subsidies, whereas private facilities were in favour of the idea (KICCE, 2004; 116). Further, the private childcare association, the Korea Private Nursery Education Association (KPNEA) was probably delighted with the ideas of the basic subsidy and graded support schemes. However, on the other hand, the association for public and national childcare centres including non-profit corporations, the Korea Edu-Care Association (KECA), complained about these plans for the schemes and were particularly opposed to the basic subsidy support concept. Their main objection was with regards to the levels of subsidy they received for employee and operational costs which they feared were going to be reduced by the introduction of the subsidy scheme. For instance, the support for the salary of a director in a public centre was probably going to be reduced from 90% to 80% and in the case of teachers, the

reduction was in the range from 90-45% to 80-30%. In contrast, the basic subsidy for the private centres was to be given to the institutions for their salaries and operational costs on the basis of the number of children who were enrolled in the centres. Because of these changes the KECA objected to the decision concerning the basic subsidy. According to their statements in public hearings they offered three explanations to justify their objections: too much competitiveness between all facilities, entailing expenses on items such as advertising the services; distortion of the caring relationship between care workers and the children; low service quality as the result and there being no true differences between private and public childcare centres (KECA, 2006³⁶)

7.1.4 Summary

The competing discourses around the dimension of affordability in providing childcare service started with concerns about how to alleviate the financial burden for parents. This consideration gathered momentum following the direction of expanding the number of public childcare centres, which was often termed the socialisation of care by progressive groups such as the PSPD and KWAU. However, at the level of policy decision making within government, the agreement to expand government expenditure for increasing the number of public childcare centres was blocked by the MOSF which needed persuading as to why the services needed to be provided by public providers which, at the time, actually made up less than 10% of the overall care market. In addition, there were different perspectives on advancing the socialisation of care held by the MGE and MOSF, particularly regarding how to approach and resolve problems. Moreover, the dominance of the private sector in the care market must also have driven this policy tension, as illustrated by comments given by interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 11. In these circumstances, the MOSF did not agree with the necessity for budgeting for additional public childcare, and therefore considered that giving the basic subsidy to the private sector was a feasible option. However, this transformation that the policy underwent could be considered as contradictory in the progression towards gonggongsung regarding Korean childcare. That is, the proposal turned to face backwards, once again confined by the original

³⁶ KECA, 2006, *Jeongukgukgongrib Boyooksisul hwakchungeul wihan jeonjindaehoi* on 13rd June 2006. Seoul: Korea Edu-Care Association.

structural limitations imposed by the market being dominated by private sector providers. In sum, the reform of childcare started with debates concerning how to alleviate the financial burden for parents and then moved on to the suggestion to build more public facilities. Eventually the policy proposal involved giving subsidies to private childcare centres which was accused by some opponents of actually encouraging the growth of the private sector as a care provider.

7.2 Adequacy

: whether to maximise or minimise governmental intervention regarding service quality

As shown above, the sphere of childcare provision was dominated by private sector providers and with the introduction of the basic subsidy allocating funding to these facilities, it was anticipated that they would begin to make improvements in their service and be as proficient as the public childcare facilities. It appears that in some respects applying the basic subsidy to the private childcare centres meant they belonged to the public childcare system alongside the publicly provided and funded ones (interviewee 6, the first minister). However, despite this, the dominant position of private childcare centres as key providers in the market led to a contested debate centring on the issue of how far the government should intervene and regulate their operations.

With regards to the issue of adequacy, in this study, this refers to the extent to which childcare provision meets parental needs and expectations regarding quality. Moreover, whether the service provision is suitable and appropriate for the different needs of parents has to be considered. Taking into account the shifts outlined above regarding the private sector providers, under the lens of adequacy the focal issue emerging in this section is government intervention in service quality. Further to this, if it was agreed that the government should regulate the private sector, the question remained was to whether this was to be minimised or maximised. At the facility level, this issue referred to the control and management of service quality in each centre. This section explores how these issues were addressed regarding improving service quality and making it more appropriate to the needs of parents.

7.2.1 Contextualising the generation of the policy of having an accreditation system

Improving service quality in childcare services was a major concern. Regarding this, in an interview, one of the professors who worked on the complete revision of the Childcare Act explained that this work to improve the service quality was central to her remit. The act had two targets: one was to clarify government responsibility for childcare rather than just treating it as a residual service and the other was to improve service quality in the market. The political concern about service quality was driven by the low satisfaction with the service quality reported by parents, many of whom held deep distrust of the centres, with the commonly shared public view being that ‘there are no childcare centres that can be fully trusted’. Given the lack of confidence with service provision, especially with the private centres, as discussed in the previous section, the revision of the Childcare Act had to include the goal of improving service quality. However regarding this, below, a respondent expressed resentment about the final amendments written into the act when it was publicly announced in January 2004:

While I belonged to the working party for the revision of the Act, I identified strict indicators to assess service quality in the market, especially for the private childcare centres. I strongly argued that the assessment should be compulsory and adopted in all facilities. However, I discovered that the contents I had raised during the discussion did not feature in the document publicly announced in January 2004. I do not know why...

(Interviewee 3, academic consultant, professor)

Before this law came into effect, private childcare centres had been registered by local authorities with specific requirements clarified in local rules. Once these centres were open for business, they could operate without any government restraints, working under a ‘self-declaration system’ (called in Korean ‘*singoje*’). Moreover, the decisions or comments of local authorities did not have any bearing on their on-going operations. However, the new procedure under the act introduced a permit system for registering their operations which required local authorities to inspect them to determine whether they had met with specific requirements defined in the law. In addition, local authorities could decide whether to allow these facilities to operate or

not, which suggests that the power of the local authorities regarding the private sector became stronger. Apart from these changes in the registration system, service quality was addressed through the introduction of the accreditation of the services in 2005, legislation for a standard curriculum from 2006 and the enforcement of attendance at a training course for care workers to obtain a mandatory qualification, also enforced from 2006. Although these institutional settings were established under the second MGE ministerial period (2005-2008), the issue of service quality had been discussed from the beginning of the reform period i.e. since the revision of the Childcare Act that was legislated in January 2004.

As briefly mentioned earlier, reported satisfaction levels when using private childcare centres were as not as favourable as those for public centres where the service quality did tend to meet with parents' expectations. The regulation of service quality had only been enforced in public childcare centres that were receiving government subsidies from the MHW and this control appeared to be a key in eventually triggering better service in them. These public centres often had waiting lists of potential clients, whereas the private ones often struggled to fill the minimum quota in each facility. According to the policy document published by the PCAFS in 2004, the First Childcare Policy Support report described this provision structure as 'a vicious circle in the care market between the public provisions and the private ones'. Repairing the lack of satisfaction with the service quality in the private sector had been considered as a main objective during the reform process and thus the government hoped that improvements could be a means of increasing the number of working mothers willing to employ private services and indirectly alleviate some of the pressures felt by mothers in achieving an appropriate work life balance.

In sum, regulating service quality in private childcare centres, which comprised a very large proportion of the care market, was a new departure. Given the dominance of the private sector in the overall care market, the introduction of the basic subsidy was considered sufficient excuse for the government to regulate the service. Before the extension under the 2004 act of the basic subsidy to the private sector, the regulation of service quality had only applied to public childcare, which represented less than 10% of the total facilities. Thus, stronger regulation of the private sector

was considered an important measure for improving the overall quality of childcare provision.

7.2.2. Building the policy

As discussed earlier, introducing the basic subsidy had been opposed by some civil organisations and even by certain parties within the government. In particular, there was tension with the MOSF (Ministry of Strategy and Finance) regarding increasing the budget for childcare. In fact, the Roh government needed to be careful about releasing too much funding, otherwise, it could be accused of wastefully pouring money into this particular service. Moreover, such actions could be interpreted by civil groups as an excuse used by the government for encouraging the growth of the private sector. As mentioned earlier, giving the basic subsidy to the private childcare centres was criticised by some because it could pose a moral hazard for the private sector. The second minister in the MGE explained that ‘I had to be aware of criticism from people claiming that giving the money to the private institutes might have led them not to have better service quality but rather just for them to have more children enrolled through the market’. The interview with the first minister demonstrated the barriers between the MGE and the MOSF regarding the endorsement of the basic subsidy:

I discovered that the attitude of the civil servants, especially the bureaucrats from the Ministry of Finance, was different. They must have been some of the most difficult people to deal with during my time. I needed to keep demonstrating the justification for why we supported these private centres even though they are not public providers. Again, there was controversy over comprehending whether the private sector could have a public objective.

(Interviewee 6, the first minister)

Similarly, one of the senior civil servants who worked within the MGE commented on the extent to which the government was challenged over spending the budget on childcare, with the issues of how to give the basic subsidy and on the basis of which criteria, being constant points of argument. The quote from the interview with her also shows that the Roh government, including the staff in the MGE, struggled with

finding a valid justification for supporting private childcare facilities with the basic subsidy.

When I was in the Ministry, we often had to listen to what people were saying. They usually argued that the government should not give money to the private sector and that we needed to make the standard of accreditation higher. However, they all had different voices about why the government needed to give the money to the private sector, how to deliver the money and with what reasons. For instance, the association of care workers insisted that the money should be given for the salary of care workers, who were mostly graduates of childcare in universities.

(Interviewee 7, senior civil servant)

Nevertheless, the introduction of the basic subsidy and the expansion of the graded subsidy triggered the government's power to regulate the whole service. The minister in the MGE illustrated the situation at that time:

I saw the difference in giving the money to the centres. In the previous governments, service regulation by governments was not taken seriously by the private sector and even within the government, because the expenditure was quite small. However, during the Roh government, government regulation mattered to them. Why? Because it was directly linked with whether the facilities would be able to get the basic subsidy or not.

(Interviewee 6, the first minister)

Therefore, the government had to convince its opponents that the basic subsidy should be given to those facilities that provided specified levels of service quality. This guarantee of checking that specified quality levels were being met by private providers also served to soothe those civil organisation groups and women's associations which were worried about the moral hazard they believed existed in relation to using private childcare centres (Interviewee 14, the second minister). The minister was convinced that unless the facilities were inspected by the government in support of the subsidy scheme, there would be no way of maintaining service quality in the private sector. Further, she argued that it was essential to give the basic subsidy to the private sector so as to improve its service quality:

I only meant to give the subsidy to the private sector when they had a high enough service quality. Otherwise, there was no point in giving the money to the private sector. If they were not providing a fair service quality, they shouldn't be allowed within the service provision. I still think that all the criteria for offering good quality of service needed to meet the mothers' expectations. Before approving institutions, we had to have a standard assessment using the criteria we agreed upon which we would base our approval. In this sense, it was right to give the basic subsidy to the private childcare centres, I think.

(Interviewee 6, the first minister)

7.2.3 Bringing the desired outcome

The accreditation of service as a condition of receiving the basic subsidy was resolutely opposed by the private sector, as the owners argued that the accreditation system would work as a mechanism to hinder them from functioning in the care market. Perhaps the private owners had come to realise that this institutional inclusion could be a way 'to trap them into the system', which was revealed in the interview with one governmental researcher. She concluded her interview saying that 'the MGE could be seen as the betrayer of the private association':

It was like 'carrot and stick'. At the beginning Minister Ji brought the private owners into the institutional scope by giving them the basic subsidy, yet this could not be sustainable... Why? Because the MGE brought in the accreditation system to sort out the market...

(Interviewee 2, former governmental researcher, professor)

As explained by the interviewee above, the basic subsidy could serve as the carrot for the private owners, but at the same time they would also have to endure the stick, namely, the accreditation of the service through inspection assessments (Interviewee 2, former governmental researcher / professor). The private providers' association, the KPNEA (Korea Private Nursery Edu-care Association) tended to be strongly opposed to the accreditation initiative, even though the relations between the KPNEA and the MGE had been cordial when initially childcare was transferred into the MGE from the MHW (see Chapter 6) and the first minister had attempted to include them in the public system by giving them the basic subsidy and extending the graded subsidy to cover their work. The private providers had expected to have much

more support from the government under the MGE as compared with that which had been offered by the MHW.

However, with the enforcement of the accreditation system under the second ministerial period of the MGE, as reported by an informant in the MGE, the private sector probably felt let down by being told that the government sought to make the accreditation system very rigorous. The relationship between the MGE and the KPNEA was bound to break down in the end over this accreditation system. The interview 7, a senior civil servant within the MGE, said in the interview:

The KPNEA has become angry with all governmental regulation, particularly the accreditation system because they were not used to this kind of governmental central regulation when they were under the MHW. But now they began complaining about all things, even the basic subsidy which they claimed was too small for them, they said.

(Interviewee 7, a senior civil servant)

The private sector facility owners may have concluded that the aim of the basic subsidy was actually to cut them completely out of the care provision system. Moreover, one of governmental officers said that ‘the accreditation system could be considered to be a procedure that could have been used to exclude private providers from the public system and thus in effect, stop them from operating their businesses’ (interviewee 2, former governmental researcher, professor). On the other hand, in support of accreditation, the KWAU (Korean Women Association United) constantly argued that the system should determine whether providers could continue to operate in the market and the leader of the KWAU emphasized the need for the close coexistence of the introduction of the basic subsidy scheme with accreditation:

I constantly argued that the service assessment should be tied with the basic subsidy. Also, the accreditation system needed to be the filtering out mechanism for the institutions which did not qualify in terms of service quality to be in the market.

(Interviewee 4, women’s group leader)

However, over time, the assessment for accreditation no longer appeared to be as strict as had been originally intended. One interviewee argued bitterly that this gradual distortion of the purpose of accreditation was because the MGE had to have the backing of the private sector:

We should have excluded the centres which were not good enough to pass the accreditation. However, the MGE did not want to do this. They needed to support them in a way. In the situation where the private sector and the MGE were on the same side, the direction of the accreditation became distorted.

(Interviewee 2, former governmental researcher / professor)

The espoused aim of the accreditation system was originally to improve service quality, especially in the private childcare centres. However, this interviewee bitterly criticised it for being an accreditation system in name only because it was of such limited power that it did not bring substantial changes in terms of maintaining the quality of the services available to parents in the care market:

We should have had ways of cutting them off from the service market whenever the service quality did not meet with the criteria. I knew that the minister did not want to do this since she did not want to lose the support from the private association as key providers of the service. She had carried them on her back during the policy establishment. I think this had been wrong in setting up the policy. As long as the MGE were on the same side as the private sector, the service quality could not ever be improved.

(Interviewee 2, former governmental researcher, professor)

Comments from the women's group leader show that she was of the opinion that lobbyists from the private sector had opposed and successfully intervened to halt the implementation of the accreditation system:

We constantly proposed that the basic subsidy needed to be linked with the accreditation of the service assessment. There was no doubt that this accreditation should be the way to weed out facilities with poor quality of service. Yet, this argument was rejected by the lobbyist group from the private sector. They powerfully protected themselves, arguing that they could not follow this accreditation system, insisting that the assessment

and regulation system cost them money to administer, which could be quite demanding on them.

(Interviewee 4, women's group leader)

Although the government knew that the issue of service quality had to be tackled, the nature of governmental intervention regarding service quality was open to debate and the extent of service regulation through accreditation was equally contested. One of the government researchers who participated in designing the accreditation system described how, under pressure from the powerful private sector lobbying parties, the accreditation concept ran in to difficulty:

I still remember that we had been in trouble due to the accreditation of the service assessment in around 2007 and 2008. The private institute association group was strongly against the accreditation system. After the Roh government, the MHW was about to abolish the accreditation system under this Lee government (2008-2012).

(Interviewee 8, senior governmental researcher)

7.2.4 Summary

Having better quality childcare and providing reliable services remained a key issue to both parents and the government and has been addressed here under the dimension of adequacy. The lack of satisfaction regarding the quality of service reported by mothers, especially with respect to the private sector, was acknowledged by the Roh government particularly the MGE which had responsibility for overseeing the provision. Thus, earlier in this thesis, in Chapter 5, some assessment of the possible impacts of the policy based attempts to change service quality have been presented in terms of data indicating the adequacy of service enjoyed by parents using childcare services after the reform.

To provide a richer account of these matters relating to adequacy the narratives discussed above have explained that regulating quality in the private sector was objected to on the grounds that it made additional demands on private owners. Back at the starting point of the reform in 2003, the Roh government intended to invite the private sector into partnership with the public sector through the policy change of

giving them the basic subsidy, as had always been applicable to the public sector providers. However, in so doing, it failed to take into account the fundamental characteristics of the private sector which meant that it would be strongly opposed to any far reaching government intervention regarding how providers ran their facilities.

During the era of the Roh government the issues of why service quality should be regulated and how to regulate it were problematic. In this sense, the introduction of the basic subsidy to the private facilities should have clarified why service quality in the private sector was to be regulated by the government. That is, the basic subsidy scheme allowed the private sector to be integrated into the public system by the receipt of government funds and in parallel, it offered the government a means to enforce regulation of childcare provision. The government having found the justification for intervention regarding service quality in the private sector was fiercely challenged by the private lobbying groups. Given the above, it appears the government was able to continue to pursue rigorously its concern about service adequacy during the implementation process.

Understanding the likely influences at play here, regarding how the governmental advocates were influenced by the lobbyist groups working on behalf of the private sector and the extent to which each of the accreditation indicators proposed for inclusion in the assessment was distorted, is of value. However, these influences are usually subtle and not visible in policy processes such as those that are the focal interest of this thesis. Comments reported by some informants representing groups other than the private sector lobby have revealed indirectly that the initial policy agenda on improving service quality was clearly distorted by the private sector's actions. This does not mean the government ministers failed to withstand the power of the private sector, but rather, the MGE and other relevant ministries were likely to accept engagement with them because support from the private sector was necessary in order to carry through the policy changes. However, again, whether this integration of the private sector into the public system has provided the right circumstances for improving service quality remains debatable.

7.3 Autonomy

: whether to abolish the childcare cost ceiling or not

This section discusses the political efforts undertaken to achieve service autonomy and availability in providing childcare services during the reform process. As discussed in Chapter 2, the term autonomy refers to the degree of freedom there needs to be in choosing and accessing the services without any institutional restraints. This section concerns the freedom to access care services of parental choice as it addresses these in the context of a liberal, free market environment.

This final section of the chapter traces competing disputes around the matters of parents' choice and access to services by outlining the context for the original meaning of these matters held by politicians, and probes whether these goals meant anything, or were merely political rhetoric. This researcher debates the nature of the political concerns expressed regarding how to offer women diverse choices and access to services in providing care. An earlier section of this chapter illustrates that the first minister leading the MGE, Mrs Ji (Feb 2003 to Jan 2005) devoted her efforts to establishing basic systems for financial support and providing an adequate service structure. Based on this, her successor, Mrs Jang (Jan 2005 to Feb 2008), was required to deal with far more diverse demands, for example, not only providing for lower-class mothers but also those from the middle and even the upper classes. Unlike the issues of affordability and adequacy, the matters of autonomy and availability were not the subject of specific policy initiatives, but this does not mean that they were not important. The matters of parental choice and access to services became key political targets, especially when responsibility was passed over to the second minister Mrs Jang.

7.3.1 Contextualising the generation of the policy

The main change in the policy direction of the second ministerial period of the MGE was to move on from policy centred on re-shaping the suppliers to the market to that focussed on parents, that is, policy centred on demanders/consumers. There were five policy blueprints set out by the PAFSC and the MOGEF: *'The First Childcare Policy Support'* (PAFSC, 2004. 6. 11); *'The Second Childcare Policy Support'* (PAFSC,

2005, 5); ‘*Sa-ssak Plan; Mid-long Term Plan*’ (MOGEF, 2006, 7); ‘*Saromaji Plan for 2010; the First Low Ageing Society Basic Plan*’ (Low Ageing Society Committee, 2006, 7); and ‘*Vision 2030*’ (The collaboration between the government and civil organizations, 2006, 8) (See Table 3.3 in Chapter 3). Whilst the early policy direction tended to emphasise the socialisation of childcare, the later policy blue-prints considered the diversity of service provision. More specifically, ‘The Sa-ssak Plan: Mid-Long Term Plan’ admitted that the policy targets to date had not included a sufficiently diverse range of childcare services (Sa-ssak Plan, 2006, MOGEF: p.32) and one of the government reports which reflected on the policy reforms pursued by the Roh government described the situation as follows:

The ‘Sa-ssak Plan: Mid-Long Term Plan’, publicly announced in 2005 by the MOGEF, originated from the critical awareness that the childcare services had not been sufficient to meet the needs of the diverse service.... Furthermore, this current policy plan expands the policy targets from the lower class to the middle class and tries to move the policy system from one that is centred on suppliers to one focussed on the demanders.

(The Participatory Government Policy Report, 2007: 54)

This report also emphasised why diverse childcare services needed to be provided by addressing: the various types of mothers’ employment, the regions where children lived and the children’s characteristics, including levels of disability and so on (Sa-ssak Plan, 2006, MOGEF: p.32). The document proposed extending facilities’ opening times in order to suit mothers’ working conditions, for example, allowing for night and even weekend childcare services to be available. Furthermore, it included the possibility of expanding services for disabled children and extending services for rural areas. These considerations of diverse needs demonstrated that the mother’s choice and access to the service had been widely discussed. Moreover, these issues were highlighted in the third report published, ‘*The Sa-ssak Plan: Mid-Long Term Plan*’ in July 2006.

Beyond these documented proposals, the data reveals that political concern regarding mothers’ choices and access had been fiercely contested in the political battle within the discourse about mothers’ rights to choose. Briefly, the matters of a mother’s choice and access to the service were led by the following political debates. Firstly,

whether to keep the cost ceiling, that is, the government-set maximum price that parents could be charged for the childcare by private and public facilities or to abolish it; and secondly, whether to have a voucher system, i.e. a voucher given to parents for the value of the care costs, which they could spend at whichever facility they chose, in order to deliver the two government subsidies i.e. the basic and graded subsidies. These two matters were discussed simultaneously, with the proponents in favour of the abolition of the ceiling being more likely to agree with the voucher system whilst those against the abolition of the ceiling also tended to be against the voucher system. Moreover, a middle way emerged, with one more faction being neither strongly against the liberalisation of service costs, nor the voucher system. Those against cost liberalisation and the voucher system were usually academics and social and welfare professionals and relatively radical NGO groups, for example, the PSPD and the KWAU. In contrast, proponents in favour of cost liberalisation mainly comprised those in economic academia, who tended to argue based on their understanding of liberal market principles, including: non-regulation, competition in the market, and better service quality through unrestrained competition.

The discussion about how to introduce more diversity in service types had been considered by the first minister within the MGE. In the interview, she recalled that the word ‘choice’ in relation to providing childcare service emerged clearly in a meeting with other government officials:

One day, I got a question in a public meeting from a government official from the MOSF. He fiercely questioned me, saying “Don’t you think that there should be a service for the upper class?” Then he made a simple example proposing that “the grandchildren of Byoung-Cheol, who is the owner of the big company Samsung, should have “the choice” to find a place for their care needs”. Then I simply answered saying “what are you talking about? His grandchildren don’t go to nurseries, you know that” ...

(Interviewee 6, the minister)

The need for diverse services was introduced in the final decision about the introduction of basic subsidies for the up to 2 years old children. During discussions about this scheme, the MOSF kept rejecting the basic subsidy, particularly when

extending the coverage of the basic subsidy to three to four year old children. The NGO group leader demonstrated the pressure on the MGE from the MOSF in deciding to apply the basic subsidies to the zero to two year old children, as follows:

I still remember that actually the argument for abolishing the cost ceiling took place during the period of the minister, Mrs Ji. It had been raised by the MOSF. This financial ministry applied pressure to accept the liberalisation of the cost to the MGE. Why? The MOSF could not have been happy with the introduction of the basic subsidy and the extension of the graded subsidy, which would lead to such a huge increase in the government budgets.

(Interviewee 10, academic consultant, NGO group leader, professor)

During the interview with the first minister, Mrs Ji, she described this battle with the MOSF as the most difficult challenge in her ministerial period. At the same time, she appears to be proud of herself for not accepting the liberalisation of the costs from the MOSF and she shared her opinion regarding cost liberalisation:

I still don't understand why we try to make stratification in using childcare services. You know we can't help having stratification between classes as long as we live in this society, in this way. Why should we make this gap again, even for younger children? Childcare is much more important than education in elementary schools. All of us must be mixed altogether within one universal system. Don't you think? The political debate about the liberalisation of the cost has been a pending issue for a long time. Even when I was in the Ministry, this issue was the most challenging for me to resolve.

(Interviewee 6, the first minister)

The opposition's call for the liberalisation of the cost was probably the most taxing challenge during the second ministerial period under Mrs Jang. Their main argument for this position was based on the expansion of the scope of service choice. That is, they were convinced that by abolishing the cost ceiling, service quality would rise as expected under the principles of the pure liberal market, i.e. that more competition leads to better service quality. One of the economists, an opponent of the government's regulation of the service cost, advanced this point in the case of the care service market:

Do you know why the service quality in the private market is still so poor? That is because of the regulation of the price... The cost is currently regulated by the government. Then, how can there be a decent quality of service? No way... Most of the experts in the area of childcare seem not to have any knowledge about the childcare industry. Rather, they tend to think pursuing profits is completely bad in this field. As long as the cost is regulated by the government, there is no way to improve the service quality. You know that the most important thing is to let providers be competitive with each other without a cost ceiling. Then consumers would know which one is the best service for them.

(Interviewee 13, academic consultant / professor)

Then he added:

Do you know what would be best and most important for the consumers? It is value for money. The consumer should be able to know which service would be the best for them. We have never let them have competition, so, the private sector has never really developed.

(Interviewee 13, academic consultant / professor)

Whether the minister Mrs Jang strongly agreed with cost liberalisation or was against it, is debateable. Some government officials and researchers who formerly worked closely with the minister indicated that when first appointed she was in favour, commenting that ‘she had appeared to approve of the abolition of the cost ceiling’ (Interviewee 10, academic consultant / NGO group leader / professor).

The interview data from another interview with a senior civil servant in the Blue House indicated that the chairperson in one of the Presidential Committees also agreed with cost liberalisation:

I was approached by somebody who works for the government as a main researcher in this area. Then, she asked me to persuade the minister not to consider the liberalisation of the cost. The researcher told me the minister had been taking this issue quite seriously and was considering the demands of the childcare service for the upper class. Then, she added the comment that the minister was only considering this issue to expand the basic subsidy, rather than completely getting into the approval of the liberalisation of the costs.

(Interviewee 10, academic consultant / NGO group leader / professor).

A consultant on one of the Presidential Committees explained come the end of the discussions, she was ordered to abolish the ceiling so that it did not apply to some private childcare facilities under exceptional conditions (Interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee).

I had been involved with working on 'The Second Childcare Support' and we faced a big and important decision about whether to keep the cost ceiling or to abolish it. 'The Ministry of Planning and Budget' insisted on having exceptional facilities which did not have any government subsidies. Their main argument was to improve service quality by abolishing the ceiling. However, we argued strongly that 'childcare' should be provided as a public good instead of being treated as a product in the market. In a way, this extremely difficult decision had continuously kept going during the time when I was there. However, I got an order from the chairperson of the Committee to put in a sentence saying that there would be some exceptional facilities which would not be incorporated into the cost ceiling controlled by the government.

(Interviewee 11, academic consultant / political appointee)

When Mrs Jang was asked about her position on cost liberalisation, she strongly denied being in favour of it:

That's not even true! I've never approved any liberalisation of the cost. I and the chairperson have got the same idea about this, as I remember. The only thing I had struggled with was to argue with the Ministry of Planning and Budget and the MOSF. You can't imagine how they pushed me to accept their ideas. Because of this pressure, I had to find a way to find an alternative. Then, the KWAU misunderstood what I had agreed. I know that the KWAU announced that statement to criticise me. However, it was a complete misunderstanding.

(Interviewee 14, the second minister)

7.3.2 Building the development of the policy

It is necessary to elicit the policy factor(s) which encouraged the government to consider cost liberalisation during this time period. The interviewee 10, an academic consultant suggested that 'the starting point for cost liberalisation was because the MOSF managed the entire annual government budget'. It appears that achieving cost

liberalisation was the one of their preconditions for accepting the basic subsidy scheme, as exemplified earlier by the interview with the first minister.

Firstly, given their remit, the MOSF was duty bound to be conscious of whether the government budget could extend to affording the basic subsidy, assuming that it would be risky for the government to take on the whole responsibility for paying the basic subsidy from the budget. Thus, the MOSF, because of the concern over the capacity of the government, wanted to devise another institutional mechanism through which they could supplement service costs. In addition, in keeping with the pro-liberalisation camp, they assumed that there would be no improvement in service quality so as long as service costs were fixed by government regulation. One external commentator, Dr Hyun-sook, Kim from the ‘Korean Institute of Republic Finance’ pointed to the burden of taxation and financial conditions. She argued that government expenditure on childcare should not be as much as Northern European countries, because, given the financial conditions and the burden of taxation on the people, the state would be taking on too much under such proposals.³⁷

Secondly, this faction assumed that there would be no improvement in service quality whilst service costs were fixed by government regulation and in fact, the government should let providers in the market decide the price by themselves and let them compete with each other. The ideology of the free market working effectively in capitalist societies was probably contributing to this stance on not intervening in any area of business engaged with by private owners with its advocates arguing that the better providers would remain as the winners in the market as they would be the first choice of mothers. Under this lens, the parental right to choose the service was interpreted as exercising choice in the free market and thus providing the stimulus for improving service quality. This point was further supported by the discourse addressing the need for diverse and even for providing for ‘posh’ requirements in the

³⁷ Hyun-Sook, Kim, 2005, Boyookryo Jayulhwawa Jeonboojiwonjungchaek (보육료 자율화와 정부지원정책). Paper presented at the 2nd hearing for the discussion about the Liberalization of childcare costs and childcare supports. 9th September 2005. National assembly room in Seoul. South Korea.

services³⁸. In fact, the interview with one of the parliamentary members demonstrated that the demand for ‘posh childcare’ from middle and high income class women was often given as the justification for cost liberalisation (Interviewee 9, parliamentary members).

There is no bureaucrat in the policy decision making process who understands the real situation of working mothers. Most male bureaucrats have not had any experiences of having a baby and at the same time to work in the contemporary working places. But they are likely to say that ‘there is a need for high quality of childcare around from mothers who are from middle and high income classes. So, we need to have cost liberalisation’. Can you see there is no voice from working mothers in the policy decision making process? I think this was all the same from the Participatory government (Roh) and even now.

(Interviewee 9, parliamentary member)

Thirdly, different expectations and assumptions about the role of the publicly funded and provided centres existing side by side within the government have been revealed with respect to in particular, the MGE and the MOSF. To begin with, the MOSF expected the publicly funded and provided facilities to only assume responsibility for the needs of the lowest income families, i.e. a residual welfare function (Hyun-sook, 2005), whereas the MGE staff tended to think the ideal service provider should be universal and based in the public sector (interviewee 7, a senior civil servant). One of the academic consultants from an economic background emphatically asserted his opinion about publicly funded and provided centres:

I have no problem with the government pouring money into public areas as much as they want. However, I think we should not build the public ones in Kang-nam area which is one of the posh districts in Seoul. Why? No one goes there...The publicly funded and provided centres should target the groups with least in society, instead of the top group of people. The rich should drink good quality wines and eat decent steaks in posh restaurants, and the poor should have cheap food or even help themselves at home in their houses. What’s wrong with this? I think this is normal in this capitalist society. It is completely wrong to assume that everyone

³⁸ Ae-Sil Kim. 2005. Boyookjungcheakui Moonjejungwa Jungchaekdaean (보육정책의 문제점과 정책대안). Paper presented at the 2nd hearing for the discussion about the Liberalization of childcare costs and childcare supports. 9th September 2005. National assembly room in Seoul. South Korea.

should be able to employ the same childcare service, regardless of their needs for service and their ability to buy it.

(Interviewee 13, academic consultant, professor)

It was not only the MOSF officials who agreed with accepting cost liberalisation. Even in the Participatory Government of President Roh, some, including the minister of the MHW (Mr Ryu) were well disposed regarding abolishing the ceiling and shared the perspective of the finance officials (interviewee 9, parliamentary member). One of the parliamentary members described this dispute within the parliament at that time. She was strongly against cost liberalisation and tried to persuade others against the MOSF officials' position:

To be fair, there were a number of parliamentary members who agreed with cost liberalisation. Every single moment whenever the main topic being discussed was low fertility, the issue of childcare naturally followed on afterwards. Then, cost liberalisation emerged as one of the key options to resolve service quality issues and the financial burden of spending government budget. Even in the party of the Social Democrats, there have been a number of members who were in favour of cost liberalisation.

(Interviewee 9, parliamentary member)

7.3.3 Bringing the desired outcome

The pressure on the expanding childcare government budget was raised by the MOSF and the MGE was faced with dealing with it. In addition, the MOSF criticised the current level of childcare costs, i.e. the sums paid by parents for using the facilities. As shown in Table 7-3 below, they pointed out that the childcare costs which were set by local authorities in each geographical area did not reflect the real costs of the resources needed for a decent quality of service. In particular, for the much younger age group of children, there were considerable variations between calculated costs that should realistically be charged and the cost ceiling setting the price actually charged to parents. The MOSF connected the difference between these sums to the poor quality of service provided, especially in the private childcare centres. The costings set by local authorities had not taken into account any price increases year on year and this meant that private childcare centres experienced difficulties in their operations, which consequently resulted in poor quality of service

(PCAFS 2004; MOGEF 2000). Again, the poor quality of service offered in the private market led to more concerns which were focussed this time on how to calculate the revised guideline cost figures that needed to reflect more realistically the expenses entailed in providing quality day to day childcare for pre-school children across the different age groups.

Table 7-3 Comparison between the guideline figure for childcare costs and the fixed cost ceiling

Unit: KRW 1,000 won per a month

	Children's age					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Cost guideline figure ('97) ¹	798	534	415	279	260	263
The cost ceiling ²	350	350	288	198	198	198
Variation	(448)	(184)	(127)	(81)	(62)	(75)

Note:

1. Guide to the cost that should realistically be charged to parents.
2. Ceiling cost set by government giving the price charged to parents regardless of actual expenditure by service providers. The ceiling is based on that applied to private childcare centres in the area of Seoul in 2005.

Source: MOSF (Ministry of Strategy and Finance), Boyookryo Jayulhwa Gumto (보육료 자율화 검토), September 2005.

These figures provided grounds in favour of cost liberalisation, abolishing the cost ceiling and allowing private facilities' providers to decide their own price levels for charging parents. In fact, this argument was fairly influential because of its connection to the matter of poor service quality in the private childcare centres. Dr Hyun-sook was the main government researcher who was asked to calculate this cost, especially taking account of annual inflation. Subsequently, the government was certain that the cost could not be afforded by government subsidy alone. At the same time, it tackled the idea about the expansion of governmental expenditure on childcare costs. On the other hand, these arguments help shed light on why some were arguing in favour of cost liberalisation in the care market, especially in terms of improving service quality.

The consideration of the mother's right to choose led to the MOSF proposing to amend the method for giving government subsidies and to use a voucher system. Whereas the proposed subsidies were supposed to be given through the institution that the child was attending, the new voucher system involved offering the paper voucher to the parent, and then letting them decide at which institution they were going to spend it. The main reason for this was that the MOSF staff were convinced that this system could make service quality better by giving the choice to mothers through the voucher. Therefore, the discussion about whether to have a voucher system featured in the issue about mother's right to choose and, at the same time, the matter of service quality.

However, the argument for introducing a voucher system caused a major argument between two main parties to the debate: the economic faction and the social welfare faction. To begin with, the economic group was convinced that the voucher system would be the only way to guarantee the mother's choice, and thus, the best way to improve service quality. At the same time, the introduction of governmental subsidies was linked to some approval for cost liberalisation. Moreover, it was emphasised that service quality would be improved by allowing private facilities to set their own service costs, which would be sufficient to cover the mothers' needs in the middle and the upper classes. Also, by having a voucher system, it was contended that the mother's choice would be guaranteed by giving her the right to choose any preferred institution. In spite of there being specific policy initiatives regarding their arguments, it shows that the discourse of a mother's right to choose had been comprehended in this context by having both cost liberalisation and the voucher system, following the notions of the liberal market economy.

The other faction, mainly composed of those from social welfare academia, argued that equality among children and the *gonggongsung* of childcare were strong arguments against this economics based reasoning. They argued that cost liberalisation and the voucher system would end up polarising childcare service provision as well as promoting stratification between classes regarding which services they employed. They were also convinced that these changes would provoke higher costs, which would eventually be passed on to all parents. One government

researcher expressed her anxiety about the potential influence of the voucher system on care provision:

There would be no point in the accreditation of the service assessment, once the voucher system is institutionalised. Furthermore, if the cost ceiling is abolished, the service provision would be polarized in the end. Everyone would be so desperate to use the expensive one, although they are not affordable. Moreover, the poor facilities might still remain, because... well, only for the poor families... you see... this will stimulate another polarisation of those using the services in the market

(Interviewee 2, governmental researcher / professor)

One representative group leader for women strongly refuted the economic group's logic, as follows:

What is the 'right' to choose the service? For mums, the first important thing which should be considered is access rather than being given a number of choices in employing the service. If there is a childcare centre near their homes with good quality of service, why do mothers want to be bothered by going further? They have got the wrong idea about mother's choice.

(Interviewee 4, women's group leader)

This emphasis on women's choices appeared along with the proposals concerning a care allowance and support for family-based childcare. By giving a cash allowance, choice is given to women regarding whether to work or care for their children by themselves at home. This care allowance idea tended to be supported by conservative groups, including the MOSF (MOSF, 2005) and it might have been considered as a positive alternative by the economics- oriented group. From the government's perspective, particularly that of the MGE, to give cash to women could be a way to save government expenditure on childcare (Interviewee 2, former governmental researcher / professor) but an alternative was to give a subsidy to the family in case some individual families wanted to employ carers for their children at home. However, the KWAU and PSPD were strongly opposed to these two policy initiatives as they judged that they were linked directly to gender issues. For instance, they feared that some women with lower incomes would choose to do the caring

work at home themselves and keep the care allowance. This response demonstrated that the issue of care needed to take into account class and income differences. Likewise, family-based childcare support would also raise gender issues, such as understanding what makes women stay at home and undertake caring work, which was discussed earlier under the concept of opportunity cost in Chapter 2.

The policy initiatives specifically linked to the element of autonomy have not been implemented and even now are still under consideration. Consequently, they cannot be assessed directly in terms of statistically evaluated changes in provision, unlike the other two elements that previously were considered in Chapter 5. Notwithstanding, this researcher argues that the discourse of women's choice became merged with those economic concerns which were mostly centred on saving the government's budget. Perhaps it can be surmised that the discourse of women's choice and access to services was not thoroughly reviewed during the political discussions.

7.3.4 Summary

Compared to the other dimensions of affordability and adequacy, the issue of autonomy has only appeared vaguely in the policy process. In fact, the discourses of 'choice' and 'access' have been rolled out alongside policy proposals to have a ceiling on childcare costs and a voucher system to deliver services. These specific financial policy proposals were raised by parties coming from an economic background or those of a relatively conservative disposition. Even within the government similar dynamics between these competing discourses appeared, even though, in principle, the discussion was originally focussed on the consideration of different needs. However, as indicated above, the discussion of different needs tended to centre on providing services for top end needs, especially those for the upper classes. Certainly, demands from the upper classes needed to be taken in to account but considering the discourse of the socialisation of care, it is questionable whether the upper class needs should have been prioritised at the time. The initial debate may have centred on the provision of the whole spectrum of care, but as has been revealed, the desires of middle and upper income families came to dominate. As

discussed in Chapter 2, the issue of autonomy requires to be understood in light of the characteristics and the prevailing level of care arrangements in each society.

7.4 Summary of this chapter

This chapter explored competing discourses in each policy initiation process drawing on the three dimensions; affordability, adequacy and autonomy, as set out in Chapter 2. Many different issues were raised during the Roh government era regarding the reform of childcare policy. Even today in 2013, many are still on-going and have not been resolved. Having presented all of the empirical data analysis in the last three chapters, the next and final chapter synthesises the outcomes and draws some conclusions on the main research questions.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, I have explored to what extent caring work especially that for children has been socialised in South Korea? To do so I have drawn on theoretical explanations regarding the socialisation of care and gender politics to shed light on how gender politics can stimulate policy changes in the provision of public childcare services. At the same time key elements which should be considered in providing childcare services in order to advance the socialisation of care have been highlighted. The research has developed two frameworks which assist in advancing theoretical understanding of the socialisation of care and gender politics. They are firstly three indicators for analysing gender politics (Table 2-1) and secondly key elements in formal care provision for socialisation of care (Table 2-2). These frameworks have been used to assess the extent to which gender politics have influenced the process of the socialisation of care in South Korea. This final chapter reflects on the insights arising from the study and how addressing the two frameworks can contribute to a greater understanding, especially with regards to proposing further research. Therefore, in this final chapter five main areas are covered:

1. Reflection on the study
2. Key discussions from the study and policy recommendations
3. Contributions from the study
4. Limitations and recommendations for further research
5. Da-deu-myeo (literally translated: closing the door)

8.1 Reflection on the study

Two research questions were raised in this research: firstly: to what extent have gender politics influenced the socialisation of care for children? And secondly: what effects have gender politics had on the modes of provision regarding public childcare services? Considering the lacuna in existing literature in understanding the reasons why policy shifts in the direction of the socialisation of care may have occurred

within specific policy contexts, the research is particularly concerned with providing appropriate analytical frameworks for examining the policy-making process with respect to gender issues and exploring the gendered nature of employing formal childcare services in the care market and when undertaking informal care work at home.

The socialisation of care is conceptualised in this research as a discourse change around the issue of caring work, which introduces the idea of care being a public responsibility rather than solely a private matter. This contested discourse is geared towards bringing political intervention that optimises responsibility for caring work between the state, market and the family as well as between men and women within the family. Further, by making a linkage with my definition of the socialisation of care, gender politics is defined as a political endeavour pertaining to bringing a gender dimension into the policy making process undertaken to advance the socialisation of care. Given this nexus between the socialisation of care and gender politics, as mentioned above, this study has developed and employed two analytical frameworks: the first contains three indicators, following a sequential order, for analysing gender politics: ‘identifying the problems and gender issues’, ‘exploring policy initiatives for the socialisation of care’ and ‘examining outcomes’ (see Table 2-1 in Chapter 2). The second sets out key elements that should be considered when providing care services so as to socialise them effectively during the policy making process. Three key dimensions comprise this framework: how to afford the provision (affordability), to what extent is there satisfaction with the service quality (adequacy), and how much autonomy does there need to be regarding the choosing and accessing of the services (autonomy), (see Table 2-2 in Chapter 2).

Table 8-1 Two Analytical Frameworks: the nexus between the socialisation of care and gender politics

1. Three indicators for analysing gender politics ¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying the problems and gender issues • exploring policy initiatives for the socialisation of care • examining outcomes
2. Three dimensions for assessing the outcome of the socialisation of care ²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affordability • adequacy • autonomy

1. See Table 2-1 in Chapter 2 for a fully detailed account and justification.

2. See Table 2-2 in Chapter 2 for a fully detailed account and justification.

Having developed these two analytical frameworks, the researcher set out to address the research questions by drawing on feminist perspectives applied in the study through a mixed methodology combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. To resolve the first research question, the researcher assessed the effect of gender politics on the nature of the public childcare services being provided. To this end, Chapter 5 gauged whether there have been any changes in delivery between pre and post reform situations at the point when childcare services are provided in institutional settings and the actual conditions for this. Given the level of institutional provision and the care conditions revealed through the quantitative analysis, there is considerable doubt regarding whether the policy of the socialisation of care has been advanced. Therefore, in spite of the paradigm shift around childcare and women's issues in South Korea, it is still difficult to say that there have been substantial achievements in the socialisation of care, especially in terms of the three dimensions of affordability, adequacy and autonomy. Secondly, in Chapter 6 the issues which were dealt with in the early stage of the policy reform process were identified, while in Chapter 7 the policy initiatives taken in response to the problems identified in Chapter 6 were more fully explored. This was to evaluate whether the initiatives could reinforce or, alternatively, challenge gender stereotypes and the systematic discrimination against mothers in the provision of childcare services. The analysis

provided in these two empirical chapters indicated that through the sharing of ideas, a paradigm shift occurred resulting in the view that childcare and women's issues were inextricably linked together. The policy responses, that is, policy on the family and work life balance have brought into being the concept of 'gonggongsung' which is taken to mean the socialisation of childcare in the Korean context. Nonetheless, the findings from these two empirical chapters have revealed that the improvement of childcare services could have been more critically discussed and more rigorously defined.

Regarding the investigation of the extent of the impact of gender politics in advancing the socialisation of care, in-depth interviews with 16 key policy actors and extensive policy documentary analysis were used in order to shed light on the political processes and competing discourses surrounding care issues during the era of political reform of public childcare policy. This qualitative approach involving in-depth interviewing and documentary analysis explored the political conflict and difficulties entailed in the incorporation of gender issues during the reform of public childcare policy. More specifically, the in-depth interviews with selected informants helped capture the nature of the debates surrounding the reform such as informal power relations or emotional responses that emerged but without ever being recorded in government documents and often given no mention in the minutes of formal meetings. The policy documentary analysis was undertaken in order to explore the political debates surrounding the reform of public childcare policy, which enabled me to establish the policy environment as background to carrying out the in-depth interviews.

8.2 Key discussions from the study and policy recommendations

From the empirical findings that have been discussed in this study three key discussion points have emerged. These are elaborated on below in this section. The exploratory phase and its findings were reported in Chapter 5 and the explanatory phase in Chapters 6 and 7 which followed the time order of the reform process as set out in Table 2-1 of Chapter 2. Regarding the exploratory phase of this study, it emerged that there was strong reliance on the informal care sector from the examination of the evidence relating to the nature of care, pre and post reforms.

Having shed light on why the situation presented in Chapter 5, i.e. after the reform, appeared as it did, the explanatory Chapters 6 and 7 revealed that, in the beginning of the reform process, state centred gender politics were central to the identification of the problem and gender issues. Moreover, further investigation of policy initiatives for the socialisation of care suggests that the phenomenon of the marketisation of care, and subsequent path dependency of events on this, were very influential. Below, each of the three dimensions is discussed and policy recommendations advanced.

8.3.1 Key discussions from the study

8.3.1.1 An illusion of institutional expansion but continuing strong reliance on informal care emerging in care provision

This research explores what has been changed at the point when the childcare services are finally delivered in the institutional settings and in the actual service conditions between before and after the reform. The institutional setting refers to the nature of state-based provision, while care practice concerns the conditions under which the care is carried out and received. In Chapter 5 a range of secondary data is presented and assessed in order to evaluate whether any changes in the institutional settings and the care conditions for care practice have occurred, with particular reference to the three dimensions of: affordability, adequacy and autonomy.

The dimension of affordability in Chapter 5 was addressed by focussing attention on the financial structures and the structures of care provision in institutional settings and the financial access for those using childcare services in care practice experienced by parents. Regarding this dimension, the data indicates that there was a definite expansion of the governmental budget for childcare services (Baek, 2009; Baek et al., 2011; Peng, 2009) with the concern about the financial burden of childcare cost for parents. This institutional change potentially sets down a platform for recognising the state taking financial responsibility for caring for children. However, it is questionable whether it brought financial alleviation of the childcare cost burden for parents. In fact, at the level of care conditions, the data analysis revealed that the financial burden on lower income groups remained more pressing when compared to higher income groups, in spite of increased governmental subsidies given to institutions. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the

problems faced by some parents in finding sufficient finances to enable them to access formal childcare services remained unresolved. Moreover, from examining the data, I found that these financial burdens have not only led to a suppression of the working participation rate for mothers but an unwillingness or inability to employ childcare services. Considering the initial concern in policy reform, that is, the alleviation of the financial burden, this is still unresolved in spite of the remarkable increase in the governmental budget on childcare. Indeed, Won and Pascall (2004) claimed that those institutional expansion on childcare has not brought about a real change in alleviating not only the financial burden of childcare but also the emotional burden of childcare especially for Korean women. This researcher concurs with the former point. Analysis of my data indicates that the increased governmental budget on childcare during the time period of the reform might in some ways only have contributed to the growth of the private sector, instead of being effective in alleviating the parents' financial burden of paying childcare costs.

Secondly, the dimension of adequacy addresses the infrastructure put in place to improve service quality and deals with parental attitudes toward employing childcare services. The evidence presented in Chapter 5 reveals that there has been a positive change and improvement in service quality in terms of a reduction in the number of children per employee and in the working hours of care workers. However, the disparity between the public and private sectors regarding care worker salaries appears to have remained constant for the period of interest. The poor working conditions of care workers, twinned with low salaries and long working hours used to be considered as key problems associated with poor service quality and as a result, the low levels of satisfaction reported by parents, especially among private sector centres' users. In fact, satisfaction with the care services among parents appears to show no improvement between pre and post reform times. Furthermore, satisfaction levels only remained constant with childcare service in the individual private sector facilities continuing to receive the lowest satisfaction scoring. Recalling the policy concern regarding improving service quality, these outcomes again raise a question about how the spending of substantial governmental subsidies has resulted in little apparent improvement in service quality.

Thirdly, the dimension of autonomy highlights the impact of service availability on parents' take up of formal childcare services, in the institutional setting without any constraints being encountered regarding provision. As a result, in Chapter 5, this dimension is taken to be focussed on the continuing reliance on informal care, despite the availability of childcare services. Regarding this issue at the institutional level, diverse types of service have been provided, for example, extended hours care, night time and 24 hour provision as well as holiday programmes. However, the use of these extra childcare programmes among all mothers has remained limited. From this evidence, it may be presumed that there still could be strong preferences for informal care within the family. In fact, it emerges that the reliance on informal care was strong for the years studied and, in reality, the trend in parents relying on the help of their children's grandparents has grown. Mostly this help was drawn upon from the fathers' side, but more recently there has been growth in this arrangement on the mothers' side. It could be claimed that employing the older generation in informal childcare instead of sharing the burden with others, namely husbands/partners and/or the wider society, was still the preference expressed by working mothers. This might be due to a lack of trust in formal childcare services, with people maintaining a cultural preference for informal caring. In sum, in terms of the gender division in caring by family members, mothers and grandmothers still shoulder the main work as caregivers.

8.3.1.2 State centred gender politics in the identification of the problems and gender issues

Having explored the statistical data in Chapter 5, I then sought to explain why the situation i.e. after the reform, is as it is, by investigating the political conflicts and struggles encountered in bringing gender issues on to the agenda of socialisation of care. This research defines the political endeavour to bring gender issues into political debates as gender politics. This has the goal of making highlighting differences and potentially reconciling imbalances between men and women in undertaking caring work. Drawing on this concept, in Chapter 6 the analysis reveals that the gender politics around the reform of childcare policy in South Korea has been mainly driven by state centred feminism, particularly President Roh's strong commitment and that of one of his administrative organisations, the Ministry of

Gender and Equality (MGE) (See the section 2.2.3 in Chapter 2). Alongside the gender mainstreaming movement, that can be considered as a transnational policy factor, the Roh government was eager to bring gender considerations into most policy making processes. That is, not only childcare policy but also with other areas, such as women's health and violence against women, being emphasised in all presidential election campaigns as the prime focus of national tasks that needed addressing. Among these, the issue of childcare was considered to be a case that brought gender sensitive perspectives to the policy agenda since the issue of childcare obviously related to women's roles as the main carers, especially in the Korean family context with its Confucian roots (Sung, 2003; Won & Pascall, 2004). In parallel, the issue of childcare has taken on economic perspectives, particularly with the on-going concern about low fertility rates, and the consequences of this for the domestic economy. It was acknowledged that investment in childcare could be a means of utilising women's labour instead of letting them stay at home, as well as it being a direct investment in children as future human resources. Taking these slightly different approaches to the issue of childcare into account, it transpired that President Roh was convinced that the issue of childcare needed to be considered as a women's issue and decided to transfer the duty of childcare away from the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) and to the Ministry of Gender and Equality (MGE). This transfer of childcare between these two ministries can be considered as the first step in initiating the reform of childcare policy during the Roh administration. It can also be seen as a critical juncture bringing about the shift to the government perceiving the demand for childcare as being directly tied to women's issues.

Nonetheless, state centred gender politics during the childcare reform process under the Roh government still encountered two structural limitations even though they had brought successfully the issue of childcare with associated gender perspectives into the political arena. These were: the relative immaturity of gender awareness in the political field and secondly, linked to this, the lack of social consensus in understanding the concept of the socialisation of care. These are addressed next.

Firstly, the discourse of the gender mainstreaming movement, it may be argued, has remained political rhetoric with an ambiguous meaning rather than it being fully

absorbed into Korean politics as a fully-fledged direction of travel (Han et al., 2008; Huh, 2005; T.-H. Kim, 2011; Ma, 2005; C.-B. Park, 2005). Certainly, real political efforts were made in order to bring gender awareness into the policy making process, but the interview data collected for this research has revealed that the terminologies of ‘gender’ and ‘gender mainstreaming movement’ were often used without any exact explanation even among civil servants and governmental researchers. In particular, this research investigation was concerned with the influence of awareness of gender and gender mainstreaming on the process of childcare reform. For example, as discussed in Chapter 6 (see 6.1.1), in the name changes affecting the Ministry of Gender and Equality (MGE), the term ‘gender equality’ still had a long way to go in order to be naturally absorbed into the name of the ministry in the Korean language. Moreover, regarding the transfer of the duty of childcare from the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) to the Ministry of Gender and Equality (MGE), it may have been that the social expectation of a woman’s traditional role as the main carer within a family was still dominant throughout the decision making over the transfer. Notwithstanding this, I argue strongly that the event of the transfer should be considered as a turning point when more concern was being expressed about childcare along with women’s issues in politics. However, at the same time, the transfer also shed light on the prevailing limited understanding of care and gender. As discussed earlier, the Ministry of Gender and Equality (MGE) was termed ‘Yeosungboo’ in Korean, which literally translated means the ‘Ministry of Women’. As argued by Kim and Ma (2004), the terminology surrounding that matter of gender equality still has a long way to go, particularly with regard to a widespread understanding of the differences in opportunities between men and women (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000). Thus, transferring the duty of childcare to the ‘Ministry of Women’ is consistent with the stereotyped view regarding the role of women as carers, which further underlines what the role of women was still expected to be at the time of the decision to make the transfer.

Although there was considerable political endeavour to bring gender issues into politics, a lack of maturity in understanding the relations between care and gender was clearly apparent. Moreover, the gendered assumption regarding the different duties between men and women in carrying out caring tasks in the family persisted

so that the issue of childcare consequently remained as the responsibility of women only. The understanding of 'gender' in undertaking caring work, does not only refer to the issue of women's roles as caregivers, but also needs to include comprehension of the different structural limitations that men and women experience in employing care services in the care market as well as when they are participating in the labour market. Although women often have a dual role, as long as their position in the labour market is marginalised and their roles are principally defined as those of caregivers at home, unlike men's roles, the socialisation of care cannot progress (Huh, 2005; Y. Kim & Ma, 2004; Ma, 2005; Peng, 2009). These dissimilar conditions have brought about different impacts on decision making between men and women, particularly regarding whether to employ childcare services or to do the care work themselves, as well as whether a woman should take part time or full time employment, or not work at all (R. Connelly, 1992; H. Joshi, 1995b; H Joshi et al., 1999). These potentially negative impacts on women should be considered within the context of gender relations in care practice. Moreover, women themselves tend to try to be good mothers, complying with the social expectations placed on them by friends and family members, as well as by cultural and/or Confucian-oriented assumptions regarding a woman's place being in the home, which may be felt strongly in the Korean context (Gelb & Palley, 1994; Goodman & Peng, 1996; Sung, 2003; Won & Pascall, 2004). Therefore, when these issues are the focus of policy discussions, gender politics should be approached with a broad, inclusive understanding of the different structural opportunities and social expectations experienced between men and women, especially when considering caring work and participation in the labour market.

As with the limitations to the depth and richness of the grasp of gender politics during the reform of childcare policy, I also contend that there was little definitive agreement over the concept of the socialisation of care, particularly concerning the extent of the socialisation of care and the ways in which it could be advanced more effectively. In fact, from the outcomes of the interviews, it emerged that the lack of childcare had become a discussion topic widespread in public opinion, although originally, it had been initiated among different social groups, such as women's groups, civil organisations, progressive groups and was driven forward by some

conservative groups which very were concerned about the long term consequences of the country's low fertility rate that had typified the reform period.

Turning to the socialisation of care, increased childcare provision was promoted through the phrase 'gonggongsung' of childcare, which according to President Roh, meant that there would be increased state responsibility for caring for children. This policy direction, 'gonggongsung', was based on implementing family policy and work life balance policy. In spite of the essential position of improved childcare policy as the platform for these policy responses, it is arguable that the concept of 'gonggongsung' remained superficial or ambiguous in the policy agenda as it was often used without the government identifying its exact meaning. In the beginning of the reform process, especially when the Roh government announced 'The First Childcare Support Policy' in 2004, the direction for childcare policy appeared to be moving towards increasing the number of publicly funded and provided childcare centres which was in keeping with the phrase 'gonggongsung'. However, the specific definition and justification for providing public childcare services was not sufficiently explained, and, for example, the extent to which the Roh government planned to increase public childcare provision was not specified, which, in fact, was entirely consistent with the lack of a definitive and fixed concept of 'gonggongsung'. It can be concluded that the identification of 'gonggongsung' had become uncertain and to some extent distorted during the rolling out of policy debates exploring policy initiatives. This point is addressed in the next section.

8.3.1.3 Marketisation of care and subsequent path dependency in the exploration of policy initiatives regarding the socialisation of care

In Chapter 7 competing discourses around each of the policy initiatives were explored in terms of the three dimensions for engaging with the second framework established for this study: affordability, adequacy and autonomy. As discussed in Chapter 2, affordability refers to the parents being able to pay for care provision from the market, adequacy concerns the extent to which childcare provision meets parental needs and expectations regarding quality, and autonomy refers to the degree of freedom there needs to be for parents choosing and accessing the services, without institutional restraints. As iterated above, this second framework captures those

issues that should be considered when providing care services so as to socialise them effectively. In brief, under this lens, it appears that the initial policy agenda of ‘gonggongsung’ was weakened significantly by the private sectors’ lobbying activities during the reform process.

Regarding the dimension of affordability, the original concern expressed by the general public and more specifically by actors in the political arena was about the financial burden of childcare costs, particularly among those parents who were purchasing childcare services from private childcare centres who were having to pay several times more in fees than parents using publicly run facilities. Reflecting on this dimension, this initial concern about relieving the financial burden was potentially a reasonable way to advance the cause of the socialisation of care, particularly considering the dominance of the private sector in the care market. This concern moved on and the issue was re-focussed on the notable inequality in cost burden that existed between public and private care facility users, and regarding this inequality, two competing discourses were debated: whether to increase public childcare provision or to utilise the extant private childcare centres by including them in the public sector. In response to these debates, the government selected to introduce a basic subsidy to give financial support to all the childcare establishments, including private childcare centres which previously did not have any subsidy for their day to day operations, unlike the public centres. Through this strategy, instead of increasing the number of public childcare centres by building additional new ones, the government appeared to take the option to utilise the extant private childcare centres which had consistently made up more than 90% of the childcare market since the Kim Young-sam government (see Chapter 3 section 3.3). This option, of including the private sector into public provision in a novel way, was expected to cost the government less than the other option of creating new facilities in the public sector (Brennan et al., 2012).

Although the aim of the basic subsidy appeared to be the alleviation of the financial burden of childcare cost for parents, some of the key informants revealed in their interview comments that this initial direction was manipulated by lobbyists representing the private sector entrepreneurs who deliberately obstructed the

intention of the initial policy agenda to expand the number of public childcare centres. The basic subsidy itself did not appear to be a problem for the private sector, and importantly, it heralded the state taking wider responsibility for childcare, at least in the sense of it spending more of its budget on it. Yet, this transformation in policy can be regarded as contradictory in its progression, especially reflecting the initial policy concern which was the alleviation of the financial burden of childcare cost for parents. This initial policy concern brought about the policy idea of increasing the number of publicly funded and provided childcare facilities. However, this policy proposal was confined to giving subsidies to private childcare centres instead of increasing the number of public childcare centres. This transformation from expanding public childcare centres to giving the basic subsidy to private childcare centres as well as to public ones, cannot avoid the observation that this policy proposal served to simply allocate the basic subsidy money to private childcare centres. As already noted, the actual direction of the proposal to increase the number of public childcare centres was restricted by the original structural limitations imposed by the market already being dominated by private sector providers.

Continuing the matter of affordability, behind the introduction of the basic subsidy, it has been revealed that through this, the government actually expected to achieve a robust justification for intervention regarding assuring the quality of service in the private sector. In fact, through the discussion about how to regulate childcare quality and which kinds of criteria should be applied, the introduction of the basic subsidy clearly offered the government a means to enforce regulation of all forms of childcare provision. However, in response, this idea was again fiercely challenged by the private sector lobbying groups through their intervention in the discussions, and as a result, the nature and the extent of regulatory control contained in each of the accreditation indicators proposed for the assessment of quality were distorted.

The previous point touches on the dimension of adequacy, which refers to the extent to which childcare provision meets parental needs and expectations. Regarding quality, I found that the government was not able to continue to pursue its concerns about service adequacy during the implementation of the reform process. It

transpired that the responsible government ministers, including the leaders of the MGE and other relevant ministries, accepted engagement with the demands of private sector agents because support from the private sector was necessary in order for the government to carry through any of the policy reforms. Within the context of the basic subsidy, the dimension of adequacy was severely challenged and control of it was, to a certain extent, taken over by the private sector providers. As a result, the state's intervention in the area of service quality in the care market appears, come the end of the process, to be weaker than intended at the outset of the policy reform, as was originally described in 'The First Childcare Policy Support' document that was published in June 2004. Moreover, the government had almost lost any justification for taking control of service quality offered in the market, completely opposite to the original intentions of the government when it had set out to apply the basic subsidy scheme.

The dimension of autonomy which refers to the degree of freedom there needs to be for parents when choosing and accessing services without institutional restraints has only featured vaguely during the debates covered in Chapters 6 and 7. The discourses of 'choice' and 'access' in purchasing the childcare services in the market, were largely understood by protagonists as the requirement to take into consideration different needs of parents using the services (Song, 2009). However, this appears to have only been discussed with respect to reflecting the necessity for childcare services that catered for upper class families. I do not suggest that the needs of the upper classes should not be considered in this sense, but it is questionable whether the upper class needs should have been prioritised at the time. The act of linking choice and access in purchasing childcare services to the requirement for 'posh childcare' may have contributed to the platform of evidence that was deployed to argue in favour of the abolition of the ceiling in childcare cost. The logic underpinning this was relatively simple in that its advocates claimed that the abolition of the ceiling set for the childcare cost charged to parents by providers could contribute to better service quality through creating unimpeded competition in the care market. By contrast, I strongly contend that the public good of childcare should not have been treated as though it were a general product, to be bought and sold in a free market. Considering the nature of childcare, it is clear that abandoning

control over maximum childcare costs would drive the price higher and, yet, parents would be eager to have the most expensive childcare services available in the market so that they could feel that they were providing the best for their own children. The original policy concern over the financial burden of childcare faced by families would never be resolved as long as the private sector providers (making up 90% of all provision) could decide the cost of childcare themselves, and thus, dictate parental choice and access with only very minimal service regulation being exercised by the state.

By exploring the competing discourses arising during the reform process, it appears that childcare policy reform was curtailed by the dominance of the private sector in the care market. Moreover, the government eventually took some advantage of the negotiations with their representatives, which meant that the state did not need to build and open more publicly funded and provided childcare facilities. This willingness to undertake negotiations with the private sector might have been facilitated by the ambiguous identification of ‘gonggongsung’ in providing childcare services, as this was not clearly defined at the outset of the policy reform process. Working within the remit of this ambiguous concept, concerns over who actually provided the childcare services might not have been all that important. However, the enduring problem was that given this ambiguity, ‘gonggongsung’ was not sufficiently robust to bring improved service quality in the care market. The private sector groups resisted being regulated by application of the proposed accreditation system and they obstructed the government plans to impose strict service criteria. With the marketisation of care having been well established for a considerable time, spanning several governmental terms of office, the power of the private sector gave even more acceleration to the arguments for abandoning the ceiling on childcare cost. Therefore, the marketisation of care seems to have been incrementally solidified during the reform process in South Korea.

8.3.2 Policy recommendations

In light of the above, I raise policy recommendations with regard to the three dimensions and argue that the childcare provision should still be publicly provided and funded in order to advance the socialisation of care in South Korea. Firstly,

regarding the dimension of affordability, the initial concern about the alleviation of financial burden needs to be brought back to the table again to resolve this. The system of childcare provision should include universally accessible, affordable, high-quality formal care provision, thereby mitigating existing gender inequalities in domestic care work. Secondly, in terms of the dimension of adequacy, the original political endeavour which was eager to improve the service quality by having accreditation systems needs to be fully maximised and stronger. For this, formal childcare provision needs to be organised so as to require skilled providers and the value of such skills be recognised through equitable wages and good working conditions. Finally, regarding the dimension of autonomy which has only appeared vaguely in the policy process, this needs to be rolled out again in order to reflect the degree of freedom there needs to be in choosing and accessing the services without any institutional restraints. To this end, care facilities need to be open to all, including the children of parents who are neither working nor taking up some form of training or education so as to improve their career options.

However, alongside these political endeavours, the fundamental question about why childcare provision requires intervention by the state needs to be answered. There have been different perspectives voiced on childcare not only between the MGE and the MOSF but also feminist groups and progressive civil groups. These different understandings have appeared as different discourses around the issue of care which was approached from economic perspectives, founded on concerns about low fertility rates and the social investment strategy focussed on children's development as well-educated future human resources. In fact, the discourse of social investment strategy has contributed towards bringing about the paradigm shift which understands that social welfare expenditure can be an investment for the future, at least in the Korean political context (see Chapter 6). Yet, I argue that this discourse of the social investment state only applied to provision for the early years of life, which mainly centred around children's development and women's work participation by those who are healthy and able to join the labour market, which gave justification to the rationale for expanding supply of early childhood education and care facilities. It should be noted however, that care provision in South Korea has been becoming more strongly marketised not only in the field of childcare provision but also in care

provision for the elderly (Chegal, 2009; J.-h. Kim, 2008; Nam, 2008). Within this, the discourse of a social investment strategy would not be able to offer any justification. Thus it would appear that perhaps, the drive for marketisation in care services might be inevitable, something which we cannot avoid in today's neoliberal society and in a way, reformers have to deal with this reality.

If this is the case, then questioning about why childcare provision requires intervention by the state needs to be changed into a question about what we could do, faced with this marketisation of care. Resting on the different institutional bases, and influenced by the path dependency of the marketisation of care provision in South Korea, the arguments for and against processes of this marketisation, need to be resolved (Brennan et al., 2012). Moreover, the policy scope of childcare policy is likely to be addressed through diverse policy areas, for example: family policy, work life balance or policy for children and it is reasonable to suggest that these characteristics of childcare policy have contributed to there being various approaches to tackling childcare provision. As this research revealed, gender politics still could have a significant role to play in devising the systems and terms of the providers' obligations to the state, and this could relate to other social policy arenas in addition to that of childcare. What I have found from this study is that socialisation of care would no longer be about the matter of who provides the services and who runs the childcare facilities, if an irretrievable situation prevails with a clear dominance of marketisation. The most important thing is that through gender politics the value of caring work is recognised, the family's childcare burden is not left as private matter and the state ensures that families are not being badly treated regarding the three dimensions of affordability, adequacy and autonomy.

8.3 Contributions from the study

Whilst carrying out this study, I have faced challenges which can be considered in terms of: finding a theoretical orientation, developing a methodological approach and executing the empirical application in the Korean context. These matters have eventually come to feature as contributions to knowledge in comprehending not only a theoretical position but also the methodological treatment and practical execution

of the study. Below I discuss what I have learnt from this study, focused around these three contributions.

- The theoretical contribution: The first challenge related to where I should orientate myself with respect to a theoretical position, especially in terms of the nexus between the socialisation of care and gender politics. The purpose of the study was to shed light on the effects and the extent of the impact of gender politics on the socialisation of care. Thus I was of the opinion that it was necessary to have certain analytical frameworks not only to examine the policy making process but also to assess any resultant changes. However, before reaching this stage of the investigation, the two concepts, the socialisation of care and gender politics, needed to be conceptualised. This was required to encompass the ways in which gender considerations could be integrated into politics as well as embrace the gender dimensions that should be considered when providing childcare services. In response, two analytical frameworks have been drawn up, one that addresses gender politics that comprises the three indicators applied to the policy making process: 'identifying the problems and gender issues', 'exploring policy initiatives for socialisation of care' and 'examining outcomes'. Regarding the advancement of the socialisation of care in providing care services, the second framework is applied to examine the socialisation of childcare: under the dimensions of 'affordability', 'adequacy' and 'autonomy'. This study thus has contributed to the theoretical elaboration of the linkage between the socialisation of care and gender politics. Moreover, these two analytical frameworks could serve as the basis for further application and may be suitable for adoption in certain countries which have undergone the challenges posed by the decline of the male-breadwinner family type and falling fertility rates) as well as those associated with the emergence of a post-industrial economy.
- The methodological contribution: Through employing a mixed methodology, I gathered richly textured information from in-depth interviews and policy documents and with this placed alongside my secondary data analysis of large scale data sets I developed a suitable way to resolve both aspects of the

research questions. These approaches were twinned with my application of a gender-oriented perspective in order to explore these in the assessment of post reform changes as well as to reflect on relevant gender issues in the policy making process. This deployment of mixed methods with the standpoint of gender perspectives therefore contributes to the justification of the mixed methodological approach for policy research and to a deeper understanding of how to integrate relevant gender issues into a mixed methodological strategy.

- The empirical application in the Korean context: After setting out my theoretical orientation and choosing a mixed methodology with gender perspectives, the investigation was empirically adopted in the Korean context. In detail, it has been applied at two levels, firstly to policy debates around the institutional settings of childcare policy and secondly, to care conditions under which the care is carried out and received. This empirical application was deemed appropriate so as to understand the Korean context in terms of the political structure and relevant contents of policy as well as the lived experiences of people's lives, particularly Korean women's burden of caring work and their demands for a sustainable work life balance. Therefore, my theoretical and methodological approaches needed to be contextualised in the Korean context, that is, into the real-life situation regarding Korean politics and the social consensus regarding the socialisation of care. The challenges that I have faced in applying the theoretical orientation and methodological approach, which originally had been set before I attempted any of the empirical work in the real world, eventually brought a better understanding of these dimensions. Therefore, by having been forced to reflect carefully on my theoretical orientation and methodological approach, these have become more robust and more fully justified.

This triangular relation between the theoretical stance, methodological approach and empirical application in this study has eventually led to better understanding of the policy initiatives instigated in order to advance the socialisation of care with an inclusive gender awareness.

8.4 Limitations and recommendations for further research

While the findings of this study cast new light on the nexus between the gender politics and the socialisation of care in South Korea, the research concurrently has three main limitations, which are discussed next.

Firstly, the conceptual framework of the socialisation of care that has been proposed for this investigation should ideally be operationalized within the context of the labour market in the country of study. In other words, this research specifically focused on the shaping of childcare policy the concept of the socialisation of care should include dimensions relating to the labour market. More specifically, the socialisation of care needs to be examined against the backdrop of various work life balance related policies, such as parental/maternity leave or flexible working arrangements. That is, sharing the responsibility for caring work does not only concern extended and universal childcare provision but it requires a broad approach that takes into consideration labour market conditions in order to reveal the structural barriers and potential assumptions about women's capabilities as workers. Women may be relatively more easily confronted with the problem of reconciling work and life to achieve a feasible balance as compared to men. Regarding what it means to be a good mother, they may experience the social expectations placed on them by friends and family members, as well as some cultural and/or Confucian-oriented assumptions, especially in the case of Korean women, and come to see a woman's place as being in the home. Therefore, in future studies, the conceptual framework of the socialisation of care will need to consider a wider view of those gender relations embedded in the labour market. Based on this, the three dimensions: affordability, adequacy and autonomy require further development to examine comprehensively the extent and nature of work life balance policies found in the labour market.

Secondly, regarding the first research question which investigates the extent of the impact of gender politics on the socialisation of care, this work suffers from a limitation in terms of a lack of some information as this researcher failed to access and thus could not interview any representatives from the incorporated and individual private childcare centres. This was in spite of many attempts to talk to such individuals. The strong interventions by the lobbyist groups from the private

sector emerged throughout the course of the study as a significant factor, yet more details about how they negotiated on behalf of the private sector groups with the government, often behind closed doors, could not be gleaned. Given my own previous experience of working on governmental projects, it was not surprising to have my approaches rejected by the private sector representatives who were generally against the policy idea of increasing public childcare provision. Therefore, in future research endeavours the researchers need to be deliberately strategic in order to capture views from these actors regarding childcare provision, including as a minimum, information on their perspectives on the socialisation of care and gender issues in childcare. One potential avenue for future research that follows on from this current work could be a study that only focuses on the intervention of the private sector during the childcare policy reform era, although this could prove a difficult field to enter. Alternatively, the study could centre on the current situation, a decade after the reform, in order to see how the initial proposal for increasing the number of public childcare centres has been played out and how the discourse of the socialisation of care has been transformed.

Also, regarding the gender balance among the informants, it might be claimed that the study included only a few male interviewees compared to the number of female ones. However, finding the key policy actors who were deeply involved with the policy reform process, and then seeking to address the additional concern of achieving a more gender balanced cohort of participants seemed to be out of my control, as my respondents were the actors who were actually there in reality. Moreover, acknowledging whether the interviewee is a female or a male was not the matter of the research, since it does not necessarily follow that female policy actors should be in the favour of gender perspectives in policy decision making process (Annesley, 2010; A. S. Orloff & Palier, 2009; Squires, 2007). The concern prioritised during the process of selecting participants was about who would be the most suitable informants, those who could assist me in investigating what problems and issues have been identified as well as to explore the initiatives proposed. Regardless of whether or not they were interested in gender concerns, and whether they had or had not raised gender concerns in public during the reform era, I wanted to access key policy actors who had been deeply involved with the policy reform process.

Therefore, the minor number of male interviewees should not be considered as a matter of limitation regarding this research but, rather, the point of what we need to consider when bringing gender issues into the policy arena.

Thirdly, regarding the second research question which assesses the effect of gender politics on the socialisation of care, this research mainly focused on quantitative data sets in order to see what had changed in the care conditions under which care is carried out and received. The quantitative secondary data were surveyed in two different time periods with different people as respondents, thus providing two snapshots: the situations in 2002 and 2009. Certainly, using the quantitative data for these two time periods was the most feasible way to compare the changes in the care conditions between before the reform and after, especially considering the short duration of the PhD and the limitations regarding the breadth of its scope. However, approaching the pre and post situations through drawing on data sets means that the research has a limitation in that it does not include mothers' voices as directly as could be the case were a qualitative approach taken to elicit more in depth information. For example, narratives concerning how mothers feel about using childcare provision and how this affects their work life balance and gender roles with their husbands/partners when doing caring work at home. Therefore, a recommendation for a prospective investigation is that it needs to illuminate the qualitative aspects of understanding care conditions at the point care when it is carried out and received. This should be achieved by listening to mothers' voices and in so doing, the researcher will be able to confirm or reject the finding from this study that institutional arrangements have not realised substantial changes in care conditions.

8.5 Da-deu-myeo (literally translated: closing the door)

The discourse of 'gonggongsung' in providing childcare services is a still key issue even today in 2013 in South Korea. Moreover, it is still a contentious concept, with debates continuing over how to define it and to what extent should governmental intervention be required in order to advance improvements in childcare provision. This research investigated the impact of Korean gender politics on the socialisation of care during the Roh government (2003-2008), at which time the government was

eager to bring in policy changes in providing childcare services. Thus, the Roh government should be considered a focal point in terms of it having expanded childcare provision and activated gender issues into politics. There was certainly strong political endeavour in order to advance the socialisation of care in providing childcare services, along with concern about recognising gender issues. With an awareness of this, the researcher aimed to explore the changes that occurred, possibly as the result of the policy reform, that is, I gauged what had been changed in the institutional settings and in the care conditions. Concerning these, there has been a definite expansion of institutional arrangements but this has failed to reach and bring about substantial changes in care conditions. Having conducted this exploratory stage, I further aimed to shed light on why the situation that had been revealed in the exploratory phase had come to be. Consequently I elicited that the state-centred gender politics met with structural limitations which were identified as being various obstructions instigated by the private sector. Moreover, the concept of the socialisation of care remained undefined throughout the reform process, and in parallel to this, marketisation became ever more solid in the Korean childcare field while the state-centred gender politics morphed in nature and the direction of the initial policy intent, ‘gonggongsung’ which could have meant the socialisation of care in the Korean context, was distorted. In sum, the marketisation of care has become much more firmly established and the reliance on informal care has remained as a significant part of childcare provision. It may be also argued that, disappointingly, informal care has shifted to relying on the older generation of women rather than the mothers’ burdens being shared more with their husbands/partners or society at large.

The socialisation of care in this research is conceptualised as a discourse change around the issue of caring work, which introduces the idea of it being a public responsibility rather than solely being a private matter. At some point in the future I hope it will be possible to bring the three dimensions of affordability, adequacy and autonomy to the analysis of the provision of not only childcare but also elderly care. By so doing, we gain a deeper understanding and insight into the realities of caring work which are still grounded in Korean women’s lives. To date, there has been significant discourse change around the issue of childcare and yet the issue is still

one of the most protean of Korean social policies. The challenges of what we have found from this study still stands at the crossroads.

Appendix: Interview schedule for the policy makers and committees

Questions will be loosely adhered to for comparisons of the political process between ‘before’ and ‘after’ including ‘during’ of the reform. But interviewees will be encouraged to talk freely and openly about any issues that concerned them.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name

Current affiliation

Job detail

Gender

STARTING

What period do you identify significantly?

Why is it significant?

What was your role? (Not just them also what was happening around them)

THE REFORM PROCESS

What was the initiative political motivation? Why?

Who and which kind of groups were strongly involved?

What did they aim for?

How did they define the public childcare?

What was your role among them?

What did you want to achieve?

- Was it successful? If not, what was the most difficult political barrier?

Which issues were debated most seriously? Why?

Did they consider informal care? If so, how did they deal with the issue?

Did those issues change over the reform period?

- If not, how were those going on differently?

- Are those issues still going at this time? If not, why?

To what extent do you know about ‘social investment’?

- How was the ideology of ‘social investment state’ working on this?
- What do you think of the impact on the reform?

To what extent do you know about ‘gender mainstreaming’?

- How was the movement of ‘gender mainstream’ working on this?
- What do you think of the impact on the reform?

How did they work together or differently?

<**FINANCE**>

What kind of issues were considered and who and which interest groups were involved?

- Social expenditure
- Financial breakdown
- Subsidies
- Economic delivery mechanism

What were the actual policies formulated?

What was the reason for having chosen the voucher system?

Which issues were considered here related to informal care?

How have those debates influenced the current provision system and informal care?

<**PROVISION**>

What kind of issues were considered and who and which interest groups were involved?

- Ownership (public/private)
- Service requirements
- Service type
- Service cost

What were the actual policies formulated?

What do you think of the big split between public and private in providing the services?

What do you think of the liberalization of the service fee?

How much is the ceiling adequate? Why?

Which issues were considered here related to informal care?

How have those debates influenced the current provision system and informal care?

<OPPORTUNITY COST>

Did they consider the situation of the women's labour market?

Did they consider the employer's contribution?

What were the issues of pension credit and tax relief?

What were the actual policies formulated?

Which issues were considered here related to informal care?

How have those debates influenced the current provision system and informal care?

<SERVICE DIVERSITY>

What kind of issues were considered and who and which interest groups were involved?

- Different needs- Special needs

How much did they think the government should be involved with those issues?

What were the actual policies formulated?

Which issues were considered here related to informal care?

How have those debates influenced the current provision system and informal care?

<SERVICE REGULATION>

What kind of issues were considered and who and which interest groups were involved?

- training formal carers
- programme management

How much did they think the government should be involved with those issues?

What were the actual policies formulated?

Which issues were considered here related to informal care?

How have those debates influenced the current provision system and informal care?

<SERVICE ASSESSMENT & MONITORING>

What kind of issues were considered and who and which interest groups were involved?

How much did they think the government should be involved with those issues?

What were the actual policies formulated?

Which issues were considered here related to informal care?

How have those debates influenced the current provision system and informal care?

<CHOICE>

What kind of issues were considered and who and which interest groups were involved?

- Public and private
- Places (day-care vs. home based)
- Opening time

How much did they think the government should be involved with those issues?

What were the actual policies formulated?

Which issues were considered here related to informal care?

How have those debates influenced the current provision system and informal care?

<ACCESS>

What kind of issues were considered and who and which interest groups were involved?

- Information and referral system
- How to get there

How much did they think the government should be involved with those issues?

What were the actual policies formulated?

Which issues were considered here related to informal care?

How have those debates influenced the current provision system and informal care?

EVALUATION OF THE REFORM

What was the key outcome?

What would like to change more, if we go back to the before?

PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIALIZING CARE

What do you think of gender issues in childcare?

What do you think of socializing care?

How much has informal care been socialized through those reforms?

How much should the informal care have been further socialized?

How do you think the public childcare service for socializing care can be improved?

Anything else you would like to say

Glossary of terms commonly used in this thesis

Abbreviation

CDA	Child Development Account
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
KCTA	Korean Childcare Teachers Associations
KECA	Korea Edu-Care Association
KICCE	Korean Institute for Childcare and Education
KIHASA	Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs
KNCW	Korean National Council of Women
KPNEA	Korea Private Nursery Education Association
KWAU	Korean Women's Association United
KWDI	Korean Women's Development Institute
KWWA	Korean Women Workers Association
MGE	Ministry of Gender and Equality
MHW	Ministry of Health and Welfare
MOGEF	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
MOSF	Ministry of Strategy and Finance
PCAFS	Presidential Committee on Ageing and Future Society
PSPD	People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

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³⁹ All Korean literature has been phonetically presented in English.

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